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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[COME TO GRIEF.]

LINK BY LINK.

BY

A POPULAR AUTHOR.

CHAPTER I.

It was a lusty beggarman,
His duds were foul and torn;
But he faunted there with a lordly air
As if to the manner born.
The baron grim bent his knee to him
When he saw him on the lawn.

"HASTEN thou, then, I pray thee, Monsieur Edouard. Speak more queek—good man. Already two times the bell of miladi has sounded."

"Patience, patience, mam'selle. We English folks can't gabble through our sentences nineteen to the dozen like you French ladies. As I was saying, Sir Marmaduke's temper is more uncontrollable than ever this morning. Either he got out of bed wrong foot first, or his letters didn't agree with him, or—"

"Bête," cries mam'selle, with a vixenish stamp of the little foot which has been tapping, tapping, with irritable impatience throughout the colloquy. "Is it to thee, imbecile, a thing impossible to render first the story and after the comment of explanation? That which imports me to know is, Sare Marmaduke, in his bad humour, what is it that he has said?"

"Said!" repeats Monsieur Edouard, the valet, turning from his impetuous questioner to

the two footmen who complete his audience. "He said nothing. He yelled at me, mam'selle, like a maniac; he roared at me like an angry bull, and the words he used was, 'Cripps, you dunder-headed hass,' says he."

"C'est un mot bien appliqué," interposes mam'selle, spitefully, under her breath. Then she and those servitors of Sir Marmaduke Knollys, Bart., look significantly at each other, as a bell immediately above their heads begins to oscillate violently, and the meekest of the footmen, a gorgeous being, in velvet plush and silken hose, murmurs, with gentle sadness:

"There he is again."

"It's for his 'Times,'" explains Mr. Cripps, with didactic confidence. "He told me to go down to the stables to meet the groom and bring it, just as though my legs would do the distance faster than his. One of you gents had best answer the bell, as I ain't supposed to be here; but look out for squalls. Gout's worse than usual this morning."

Ring, ring, ring! Thud, thud, thud! With the shrill clamour of the bell mingle the dull strokes of a gong, beaten by no feeble hand.

"I wish to goodness he had got in his fingers as well as in his toes," is the amiable comment of the meek footman as he departs to answer that continuous and imperative summons.

A handsome room, large, lofty, and luxuriously furnished. In one of the far corners, coiled like a writhing crimson snake upon the narrow border of black oak beyond the verge of the carpet lies a bellrope which the occupant of the apartment in his fury has torn down and flung away.

Progressing with slow but easy motion over the velvet pile moves an easychair of elaborate workmanship, the propelling power being the

strength of him who sits therein applied to two long lever-like handles. He seems to be making for the recess of a bay window, and at the apparition of the meek footman he increases rather than diminishes the speed of this peculiar locomotive, glaring round the while with blood-shot, wrathful eyes.

"A set of lazy, skulking hounds!" he cries, in irate salutation. "A set of locusts and thieves, you servants, who would let me die in my chair or burst forty bloodvessels trying to make you hear and answer my bell. Indoors or out, footmen, coachmen, or gardeners, it is all the same. Look yonder, you dilatory, inattentive scoundrel, and tell me the meaning of that."

He has reached the bay window. A sweep of the arm, a pointing forefinger indicate that in the bright June sunshine out of doors must be sought the origin of this tornado of passion. The meek footman advances to his master's elbow, and this is what he sees:

A spacious garden, mapped out in painful precision in beds that are like so many problems of the first book of Euclid, done in gaudy colours upon a ground of sand, so severely and mathematically correct are their regular outlines. Astride—à la Colossus of Rhodes—of one of the problems, just below the apex of a triangle, and in full view of Sir Marmaduke's bay window, is the stooping figure of a man.

"Do you see that pilfering vagabond marching about my grounds and coolly plucking a nosegay of my flowers?" cries the baronet, turning his bloodshot eyes upon the footman, and almost foaming with rage. "Bring him up to the window, half-a-dozen of you. The villain shall be ducked in the horse-pond for his impudence before he is a quarter of an hour older if



he fail to give a good account of himself. Will you be gone, idiot, or must I throw this footstool—"

But as his strong, white hands move towards so formidable a missile the meek footman flies in terror, and the speaker, with a sob of exhaustion, sinks back into the roomy chair and shuts his eyes to exclude the sight of that irreverent and kleptomaniacal intruder upon aristocratic repose.

He must have been a personable man in his day, this irate baronet, before his massive frame acquired undue corpulence, before his regular features became swollen and puffy by reason of habitual self-indulgence, or his hereditary enemy the gout made good the possession of his lower limbs.

But now he is a bloated, helpless mass of flesh and physical comeliness has departed. There are lines upon the beetling brow, about his closed eyes, and radiating from the sensual lips towards either corner of the jaw, which tell of evil passions rarely repressed, and other lines which denote that life has become an inheritance of pain.

Presently the weary eyelids lift a little that he may watch the carrying out of his orders. Then Sir Marmaduke Knollys, Bart., throws himself well forward in the chair, his great white fingers interlacing each other with restless impatience, whilst his swollen features grow purple with impotent indignation.

The "pilfering vagabond" has sauntered nearer to the house, and, with head thrown back, is scanning its architectural proportions with an air of contemplative criticism. In one hand he holds a brilliant bouquet of floral treasures, in the other a short black pipe, whilst from his lips issues a dense volume of tobacco smoke. Replacing the pipe between his teeth he searches the lapet of the loose canvas jacket he wears for a convenient buttonhole, and, finding none, he takes a claspknife from his pocket, opens it, and deliberately cuts a slit, through which he thrusts the stems of his bouquet with complacent satisfaction.

"At last—thank Heaven!" sighs the baronet.

The ejaculation is prompted by the appearance on the scene of the meek footman, his brother in plush, two gardeners, and a groom. It is footman No. 2 who heads the group.

"Fellah, what are you doing here?" he cries, imposingly, and at the sound of that authoritative voice the stranger desists from contemplation of the house and regards the interrogator from head to foot with curious scrutiny, as though he were examining some rare bird of wonderful plumage.

"What's that to you, Yaller-shins?" he answers at length, with good-humoured, derisive sarcasm.

He presents a sufficiently incongruous appearance, this unlicensed intruder upon the privacy of an English gentleman's grounds. He is made up of contradictions. Although tall and broad in figure he is thin almost to emaciation, yet apparently in perfect health. His merry, twinkling eyes are so small and so deep-set that in moments of jocular enjoyment, such as the present, they become almost invisible, but his mouth stretches almost from ear to ear, whilst the thinness of the lips gives it the appearance of an accidental slit in his visage.

His greasy canvas suit and his starchless shirt are distinctly unclean, and the latter is innocent of collar; but he rejoices in a brandnew necktie of blue satin made in the shape of a sailor's knot. By way of protection from the sun, he wears a dirty straw hat exceeding broad in brim, but it is perched on the extreme back of his head.

As he speaks he removes the black pipe from his thin lips, and when the footman, aggrieved by the pointed reference to his shins, makes a forward movement in the nature of a bellicose demonstration, he fires at the flunkey's silken hose a salute of smoke-discoloured saliva, which has the effect of making that worthy spring back again with most undignified alacrity.

"Stow cheek," says the head gardener, ad-

vancing to the fore, "you've got orders to come to that window for Sir Marmaduke to speak to you, and we've got orders to bring you, if so be as you don't seem inclined."

"Bring me then," answers the stranger, laconically, replacing the pipe in his mouth and thrusting his hands deep into the pockets of the canvas unmentionables.

But somehow neither the footman, the groom, nor the gardeners appear in a hurry to accept that quiet invitation.

"Best come without a fuss," urges one of the latter, persuasively. "Sir Marmaduke's a magistrate, and might commit you for stealin' of his flowers."

The intruder's twinkling eyes are very near disappearance once more as he replies:

"I'm sure Sir Marmaduke's too much of a gen'lman to commit an old friend and 'quaintance come to pay him a mornin' call. I haven't got my wistlin' cards about me," he continues, reflectively, parting his breast pocket, "but you may tell him that my name is—"

"How long will you scoundrels stand chattering before my very eyes?" thunders a distant but powerful voice, hoarse and almost inarticulate with passion. "Bring the vagabond here bodily!"

"What a nice pleasant gen'lman, with a insinivatin' way about him, my old friend has grown," says the stranger, and again his twinkling eyes disappear, as he turns towards the bow window, which Crimp, the valet, has thrown open, and above the sill of which the baronet's purple face and pointing forefinger are visible. "Tell him, with the wagabone's compliments mind, that the air is so balmy and sweet out o' doors in this bootiful garden, I won't intrude, but will trouble him to step out and speak with me."

"He's gouty and can't stir from his chair, ye cussed fool," exclaims the head gardener, angrily.

"Ah! that alters the case," replies the man, with an affectation of suave dignity, sauntering towards the window and touching his forehead in careless acknowledgment of its furious occupant.

"What is the villain's name? What does he want?" shouts the baronet, but even as he speaks a light of partial recognition comes into his angry, bloodshot eyes.

"Come, come, Master Duke, don't you know me?" says the man, in a tone of friendly remonstrance, and at the query Sir Marmaduke sinks back in his capacious chair, collapsing as he is wont to do after one of his fits of ferocious excitement.

"Shut the window, Crimp, and bid him come round," he murmurs, huskily. "I—I feel very ill."

CHAPTER II.

I will not see her, Cathbert. There be wounds
Which pass for healed, and yet are given to ache
When aught provokes them. So the sight of her
Reopenin', perchance, a grisly scar,
Might set it quivering.

It is no fictitious plea of indisposition which Sir Marmaduke Knollys, Bart., has set up. He lies back in his easy-chair, a flaccid, strengthless mass of quivering flesh, and the purple hue of his complexion has changed to a livid ghastliness which looks like that of approaching dissolution.

Crimp, the valet, who has seen him suffer from similar attacks before, is bathing his forehead with aromatic essences, and is applying pungent smelling salts to his nostrils. By the time the queer visitor enters Sir Marmaduke has sufficiently recovered to wave him to a chair and to request, in husky, feeble tones strangely unlike the stentorian roar of a few minutes earlier, that he will be seated.

Whereat the vagabond, in no wise abashed by the unwanted splendour of his surroundings, but wearing still, to the valet's stupefaction, his broad-brimmed hat, and smoking still his short black pipe, selects the chair that is most to his

mind, and crossing his canvas-covered legs, awaits, in an easy attitude, the moment when the invalid may feel invigorated enough to commence a conversation.

"That will do, Crimp; you may go now," says the latter, after a time. "If I need anything I will ring, or this—this gentleman will sound the gong for me."

"That's more the ticket," comments the stranger, stretching his slit of a mouth in a noiseless grin, as the astounded valet retires. "Not 'willain' and 'wagabone,' but 'this gen'lman,' when you recognises an old 'quaintance, Master Duke. Sir Marmaduke, I should say, I suppose, but you'll 'scuse the old title, sir, as seems to come more familiar like."

"Certainly, certainly, I am glad to hear it again, Sir Blunt," murmurs the baronet, wearily, but the malignant glare of his blood-shot eyes gives the lie direct to a speech which would fain be cordial, and the partial disappearance of the vagabond's twinkling optics proves that he detects and appreciates the paradox.

"There's only one thing more," he continues, malleolously. "When two gen'lmen, as is gen'lmen, meets in a friendly way after a long absence which makes the 'art grow fonder, it's only perlite to liquor up. A social glass—"

"My cellar is at your disposal," answers Sir Marmaduke, faintly. "Be good enough to topsh the gong at your feet. What will you drink, Blunt?"

"Fizz," responds Mr. Blunt, with prompt decision. "I've travelled in many lands, Master Duke, since we met afore, and I've drunk many queer mixtures, but for givin' a tone to the system, and wholesome elevation to the spirits at this hour of the mornin', it's my 'perience that there's nothing like 'fizz.' 'Leastwise, when it is 'fizz,' I mean, and not gooseberry wine cooked up with spirits of alcohol, and flavoured—"

"A large bottle of champagne and a tumbler," commands the baronet, as the door opens.

"Two tumblers," shouts the vagabond, amending the order, and although his companion's eyes flash fire, he endures the impertinence in silence.

"I've got a reason for wantin' two tumblers," explains Mr. Blunt, amicably. "You see for a matter of twenty year I've had ups and downs of luck—wiccassitudes, don't you call 'em? but twelve months ago I made my fortune gold-digging, and since then I've ho-nobbed on ekal terms with other swells. Still I don't know as I've put my legs under a real live barrowknigh's mahogany, and clinked glasses with him as a dook might do. It'll be a new luxury, and that's why I asked for the 'fizz,' for I ain't dry. That'll do, thickhead. Put down the tray, and I'll pour out the sparkling for your master and me."

"I am forbidden to drink wine," mutters the invalid, coldly.

"So much the better," answers his visitor, cheerily. "Werry little will serve you for a toast, and there'll be the more left for me. Now, Master Duke, clink glasses—so, that's right. Here's health and reformation to us. As to health, it strikes me, judgin' from results, that gold-digging must be a healthier occupation than barrowknighin'; and as to reformation, I suppose that since you took to the barrowknighin' you've only eased farmers of their rents in what you may call a legitumut way."

"Be careful what you say, Blunt," remonstrates Sir Marmaduke, querulously, with an apprehensive glance around. "Remember that walls have ears. I presume that after an absence of nearly a quarter of a century you did not come here to rake up events that are better consigned to oblivion."

"I don't know what obliivun means," says the vagabond, emptying the remainder of the bottle into his tumbler. "I didn't come here to make myself unpleasant; and I'm sure after the werry warm reception you give me in the gardin'—"

"Being ignorant of your identity remember."
"True," assents Mr. Blunt, with a mollified air. "Well, then, we'll let bygones be bygones, Mr. Duke. The object of my visit, beyond the makin' of a friendly call, is to get out of debt. Twenty year and more ago you lent me a hundred pound—"

"GAVE you, GAVE you—don't mention it," says Sir Marmaduke, hastily.

"Lent—me—a—hundred—pound," repeats the vagabond, with emphatic deliberation. "My eddication havin' been unfortunately neglected in early life, I ain't a don hand at figgers; but I know that a sum out at interest doubles itself in about fifteen year, and I reckon as I now owe you something like two hundred and fifty pound, more or less. The odds ain't no difference between intimate friends like us. Here's the money, and thank'ee kindly for the loan."

From an inner pocket (secured with many buttons) of his canvas jacket he has drawn a bulky pocket-book. It is a fat and plethoric pocket-book, which, when the strap which fastens it is removed, disgorges a mass of Bank of England notes, crisp and clean. Three of these the owner selects, and pushes them across the table.

"Keep them—keep them; it was no loan," cries the baronet.

"Nay," answers Mr. Blunt, firmly. "I would say 'Thank 'ee kindly' for that offer too if 'twere made honestly, with an amiable look in your eye. You needn't be afraid, after twenty year o' silence, that I'm a goin' to split on ye about Farmer Singleton's affair—not I. I want no hush-money, Sir Marmaduke; and I took no hush-money in the old time when I borrowed the hundred pound to emigrate with. It were quite enough for me, and I were your friend and not your foe from the moment you acted straight in that other little affair we know of. By Blazes!" cries the vagabond, with a sudden burst of fury, "if you hadn't acted straight and like an honest man I'd have taken your heart's blood!"

The two men are silent. He who has just spoken contemplates moodily the intricate pattern of the carpet, but he is not studying the design; his thoughts have gone back—back through the long vista of years, to the days of his early manhood.

Sir Marmaduke has fallen back in his easy-chair, and appears to be in imminent danger of a relapse. His face is of an ashen hue, great beads of cold perspiration stand out upon his forehead, his white hands are quivering like aspen leaves.

"They told me in the village that she is living," says the vagabond, in a strange, altered voice, which tells of deep feeling curiously stirred. "Master Duke, is she well?"

"Of—of whom do you speak?"

"Of whom should I speak?" retorts Mr. Blunt, sternly. "Of your lady."

"She is well," answers the baronet, faintly.

"And happy?"

"Quite happy, Blunt, as I truly—"

"Who is this?" interrupts Mr. Blunt, unceremoniously, as the door opens and a young man enters, booted and spurred, and carrying a riding-whip in his exquisitely-gloved hand. A supercilious elevation of the intruder's eyebrows, and the air with which, affixing an eye-glass, he takes stock of the vagabond's outer man (the canvas suit, the gaudy necktie, the broad-brimmed hat perched still on the back of the head, the huge buttonhole of brilliant flowers, and the short black pipe) says "Who is this?" also, as plainly as words could do.

"My son and heir, Chandos Knollys," murmurs the baronet.

"Her boy," comments Mr. Blunt, musingly, by way of addendum. "Come here, lad; I want to look at you."

"Certainly, sir, certainly," says the young man, advancing with ironical politeness. "Front view or back view, and any posture you may be pleased to desire."

There is contemptuous insolence in the drawling tone and in the look with which, caressing an

incipient moustache, Chandos Knollys returns the scrutiny of his father's visitor.

Sir Marmaduke moves uneasily in his chair; but either the irony is too delicate to penetrate the vagabond's tough mental epidermis or he is too preoccupied with painful recollections to heed it.

"Like enough to you, Master Duke, as you were twenty year ago," he mutters, "but no resemblance to her as I can see."

"Who is the mysterious 'her'?" asks the young man, with languid curiosity.

"Your mother, lad. She and I were friends once."

"Indeed!" cries Chandos Knollys, with another supercilious elevation of the eyebrows. "My mother will be here in a few minutes, and will be charmed to renew the acquaintance I am sure."

"Nay, nay, that won't do," exclaims Mr. Blunt, springing from his seat and glancing with laughable perturbation at his soiled and greasy habiliments. "I ain't exactly in the right trim for ladies' company you see. Another time, perhaps, but most likely not—most likely not."

"I am sure Lady Knollys will be delighted to receive you at any time," says Chandos, with exaggerated urbanity, and malicious enjoyment of the other's discomfort.

"Better not, 'twould only set old wounds a bleedin', perhaps," answers the vagabond, solemnly. "Master Duke, I'm going into Leicestershire now to hunt up my own people if I can, and set 'em all on their legs now I'm a rich man. I don't s'pose I shall ever find my way into these parts again now the bizness between us is settled. I wish ye good bye."

He extends a red rough paw of a hand, and the baronet's white fingers grasp it not unwillingly.

"Good bye, Blunt," he murmurs, feebly.

"I won't offer to shake hands with you, lad, I might spoil yer lavender kids," he adds, nodding to Chandos; and the unintentional sarcasm finds a joint in the young man's armour of complacent dandyism, and brings the blood to his dark cheek, as an intentional shaft might not have done. "And I won't go out by the way I came or p'raps I might meet your mother in the hall. I'll drop down from the winder and cut across the garden once more. I wish ye both good bye."

He throws open the bow window, and with a parting nod lays one of his great red hands on the sill and vaults lightly out. Chandos Knollys stands watching him, until, threading the geometrical flower-beds with elastic step, he rounds the corner of a greenhouse and disappears.

"Who is your queer friend, sir, and what did he want?" he asks, at length, turning to his father.

Sir Marmaduke is evidently recovering from his state of collapse; the purple hue is returning to his puffy face, and his tones gain in angry volume as he answers.

"He came to pay me some money—an old debt. What brought you here?"

"I came to ask you for some," is his son's reply.

"The old tale," says the baronet, savagely.

"What is the excuse this time?"

"I want to buy a horse."

"I have given you at least five hundred pounds within six months, on the same pretext, and not an animal has found its way into my stables," cries Sir Marmaduke. "You are a profligate spendthrift, Chandos Knollys."

"Possibly; only it is not polite to say so. I fear it runs in the blood," retorts the young man, with languid composure.

"And why, in the name of mischief," inquires the baronet, glaring furiously at him with his bloodshot eyes, "why did you suggest that that infernal ragamuffin in dirty canvas should see your mother?"

"My mother is always charmed to receive her friends," answers Chandos, with an amused smile.

"But in this case she would be anything but charmed, sir. Here is the money the second time!"

brought me—two hundred and fifty pounds. It is yours on one condition, that you say nothing to my lady about our queer visitor."

"Agreed, foid'honneur!" cries the son, expeditionally pocketing the notes.

"Ring the bell," commands the father, with a scowl. "Remember, if a word of this gets to my wife's ear I'll—I'll—I'll stop the preparations for celebrating your majority. Crimp!"

"Yes, Sir Marmaduke," answers the valet, obsequiously.

"Tell every servant in my employ," thunders the baronet, "that if the scamp who thrust himself into my presence this morning shows a second time he is to be put outside the park gates and kept there. I will not see him upon any plea; and if he succeed in forcing his way into the house or grounds I will that day discharge every man-servant about the place."

Wearily, and with a catching of the breath that is almost a smothered sob, Sir Marmaduke closes his heavy eyes and lies back upon the soft cushions of the capacious chair. Then the valet, lighthearted, goes out to discuss in the servants' hall the occurrences of the morning; and the heir, lighthearted, goes out to ride in the bright June sunshine, leaving him to endure as best he may the sharp twinges of his hereditary foe and the still more excruciating throes of mental suffering.

CHAPTER III.

Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

AN English turnpike road, broad, dusty, treeless; a blazing sun, mounting higher and higher toward mid-heaven; a gentleman "upon the tramp." Two gentlemen, one might say, for at the heels of the human patrician marches sedately a canine aristocrat—an immense Newfoundland dog.

Since daybreak they have been abroad, these two friends and fellow-travellers, the master and his faithful dumb servant, and they have covered many long miles of road. Hours ago they halted at a quaint roadside inn, and sat down at a wooden table beneath a diamond-paned window to demolish, one the great rashers of steaming bacon and many eggs therewith, the other all the broken victuals the house could afford. Then, with glad hearts, they strode forth like giants refreshed. Within the last fortnight they have visited scores of such unpretending hostleries, for they are in the middle of a walking tour.

A typical Englishman is this tourist who, with dog at heel, is doing with such gusto five and twenty miles per diem of the difficult Leamshire country. He is the kind of man on whom we are wont to look with pride, telling ourselves that he is "young England" to the backbone; a son of the soil, the exact fellow to whom no other land on earth can produce. In those thick walking boots of his he stands inches above six feet; his shoulders are broad, his chest deep, his concealed strength immense, yet he looks a lightly-built and graceful strapping, with his narrow flanks and long, lithe, muscular limbs.

You can hardly see his hair, of course, cropped as it is jail-bird fashion, but beneath the grey felt hat it insists, despite the chastening of stiff brushes and cold water, upon breaking into a hundred little brown curls that will not be plastered down sleek and straight.

His keen blue eyes look at you frankly and fearlessly, as an honest man's eyes ever do, and his bright face, debonaire, but not handsome, is the index to a spirit pure and uncorrupted as it is manly and brave. If you were to meet him, not upon this dusty turnpike road, but in primeval South American forests, on lofty Alpine peaks, on trackless prairies of the Far West, or in a Chinese pagoda, you would say "Anglo-Saxon" at a glance, thanking Heaven that Britain has still in every land many of her children, representatives as worthy as he.

He has slackened pace since that climbing

Cyclops, the sun god, began to glare upon him so fiercely. He is hot and tired, and very weary of this interminable dusty turnpike road. When he reaches, presently, a narrow, grass-grown lane, which falls away to the right, his hesitation whether or not to risk the lengthening of his journey by turning into it is but momentary.

So he deviates from the path of rectitude with that delight in conscious wrong-doing which is common to us all, a consequence, perhaps, of original sin.

Nor is the transgression unrewarded. Only a hundred yards or so along the descending grass-grown lane he comes to a diminutive stream of water trickling across it on a gravelly bed. Panting Rex, whose great tongue has been hanging out like a red flag of distress, rushes forward joyously. So excellent an example is not to be refused. Colin Cathcart, with a gay laugh, stretches himself upon the green turf, and laps like a dog likewise.

Clear as crystal, cold as ice, fresh from Dame Nature's filter, this draught of spring water on a hot June morning is a libation fit for the gods. The young tourist rises to his feet, and goes on his way rejoicing.

Yet is he tired, for he has walked continuously before and since breakfast, and a breeze which was at first strong and refreshing has died away to the faintest zephyr. Presently, rounding a sharp curve in the narrow lane, he comes to a spot where it is quite overgrown, not as before with irregular patches of grass, but with soft, velvety moss, across which a belt of fir trees on the sloping hillside casts a gracious shadow. The sight is irresistible.

Lifting the knapsack from his shoulders, Colin Cathcart places it to serve as an impromptu pillow, and, with a sigh of grateful contentment, stretches his long limbs upon the mossy couch in luxurious repose.

It is a charming resting-place. Watching lazily the steep, fir-crowned bank opposite, he sees a baby rabbit peep forth, emerge from his burrow, and, sitting erect upon his haunches, look around with bright, vigilant eyes at the great world of the lane, and at those strange new features in it, the recumbent figures of a man and a dog.

Above the rabbit he sees birds hopping from bough to bough and commenting in cheery, chirpy bird-language upon the intruders. Yet higher he sees an azure sky flecked with fleecy white, but its brilliancy is so dazzling he is glad to close his eyes and shut it out. Then a soft weight presses down his eyelids, and in another instant he is fast asleep.

Man and dog sleep on, half a dozen baby rabbits have joined the first, the birds call to each other among the boughs. Noiselessly a light basket-carriage rounds the sharp curve of the narrow lane. The run of the wheels, the beating of the hoofs of the rough Shetland ponies which draw it are almost inaudible upon the turf and the moss. The rough ponies swerve and plunge, avoiding that prostrate sleeper, but the wheel of the carriage strikes and passes over his body, awakening him to a consciousness of the blow and to a sensation of acute and abiding pain.

Nevertheless he springs to his feet. So narrow is the lane that in swerving to avoid him the ponies have run the carriage up the opposite bank, capsizing it, and ejecting the little lady who was driving as smartly almost as though she had been shot from a catapult. Fortunately, the carriage is very low and the moss is very soft. A glance convinces Colin that she has sustained no injury. One of the ponies is on the ground, the other is rearing and plunging as though possessed. Instinctively he rushes to their heads.

How it was all done he hardly knows afterwards. By sheer strength he succeeds in holding them with one hand, whilst with the other he contrives to open a penknife, and by cutting the traces to set them free. The pole of the carriage snapped in the overthrow like a rotten reed, and by his promptitude he has prevented the ponies from kicking the frail vehicle to smithereens. As they gallop madly down the lane he turns to the driver, who, after one

attempt to rise, from which she desisted with a sharp cry, has assumed a sitting position upon the mossy turf.

"It is a shameful thing, and you shall be punished for it most severely," she cries, with angry vehemence. "Uncle John's pretty present a complete wreck, and my dear little ponies gone nobody knows where. How dare you cut the beautiful harness with your knife?"

He stands before her bareheaded, with sorrowful compunction written large upon his honest features.

"It was the only chance to hinder the ponies from kicking the carriage to pieces and injuring each other," he explains, humbly.

"And how dare you upset me?" she continues, with gathering ire. "You, who call yourself a gentleman, to lie sleeping in the road like a common loafer, a tramp, a gipsy, with that huge, ugly beast by your side?"

He has not called himself a gentleman, and the speech is a tacit admission that he looks like one, but of that he does not think. He is only conscious that the refined beauty of this little virago is the most perfect he has ever seen, and that her great grey eyes, stars of the first magnitude, are blazing at him with wrathful indignation.

"I am very, very sorry," he replies, meekly. "It did not occur to me from the appearance of this lane that it was ever used save by pedestrians."

"A soft answer turneth away wrath," and Rex, vilified as a "huge, ugly beast," is gravely licking the hands and trying to lick the face of his traducer. The absurdity of the position appeals to the sense of humour of this small person upon the ground; and, relenting, she utters a low note of laughter, genuine if somewhat hysterical.

"Nor is it," she says. "But the turnpike was so dusty and hot and this lane was so green and inviting, and—and—there is no reason why one should not drive through it."

"Of course not," assents Colin, with manifest relief at the happy turn her anger is taking. Then he wonders how long this little lady is going to sit upon the mossy turf.

"May I assist you to rise?" he asks, courteously, but diffidently, holding out both his hands.

"I fear my ankle is sprained," she replies, and, rejecting the proffered assistance, she makes an attempt to struggle to her feet, but sinks back again with a moan of pain.

"It is very bad; worse than I thought. I must try to get the boot off," she says, piteously. Then he averts his face, thinking, like the true gentleman he is, that his gaze may embarrass her. But when he looks again her face is paler than before and the task is yet unaccomplished.

"I cannot bear the pain," she explains, faintly, and in a trice Colin Cathcart is kneeling by her side and is opening that sharp penknife which has already proved so useful.

"You must forget that I am a stranger—there is no help for it," he remarks, apologetically, and in another minute the pressure of the elastic is removed, the leather is cut away, and, with a blissful feeling of relief, his companion hides a tiny stockinged foot beneath the skirt of her robe.

"What is to be done?" she cries, with asperity, perhaps to conceal her embarrassment. "We might stay here all day and not a soul would come to us."

"I must carry you to the nearest house," answers Colin, with decision.

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

A TWENTY-SEVEN-INCH REFRACTING TELESCOPE.—The great Vienna refractor is now fully completed, and will soon be permanently located in the Imperial and Royal Observatory, in the vicinity of Vienna. It is the largest refractor in the world, having an aperture of 27 inches. Many persons have visited Mr. Grubb's observa-

tory at Rathmines, near Dublin, and have had splendid views of the moon. The tube, which is 35 feet long, weighs seven tons, and yet is so excellently fitted that it can be turned in any direction by a child.

ELECTRIC LAMP LIGHTER.—Two ingenious pieces of electrical apparatus for lighting and extinguishing lamps have recently appeared. In one of them (M. Margret's system) the oil-lamp stands on a base in which is a horizontal electromagnet. From the armature of this rise two parallel curved rods of copper, joined at the top by a platinum spiral, which is rendered incandescent by a battery current, and brought in that state to the wick, when the armature is attracted. In this movement towards the wick, a small bellows is compressed, giving a puff of air through a tube rebounding on the wick. In the case of lighting the lamp, this puff has no effect, but when the lamp has been burning, and is to be extinguished, the puff produced by a momentary passage of the current blows the flame out, and there is not time for the spiral to relight the lamp. In the other system (that of M. Ranque), a platinum spiral is brought to the wick, much in the same way, but the lamp is put out by an extinguisher at the end of a curved and pivoted wire. The contrivance is such that the extinguisher is brought down to the wick, or raised from it (through attraction of the armature) according as the flame is to be put out or lit.

REGENERATIVE MARINE BOILER FURNACES.—A few weeks ago Dr. Siemens delivered a lecture in Glasgow on gas and electricity as heating agents, in the course of which he described a new form of regenerative furnace or gas producer, which he thought might eventually supersede the terrible labour of the firemen on board steam vessels. There certainly is no insuperable difficulty in applying this principle on board ship; for, stated simply, it consists in converting the fuel into gas and burning the latter under the boilers, instead of shovelling coals on to the fires, producing volumes of smoke, and involving labour which is of the severest and most exhausting kind. An experiment, which is to be carried out at the Dalmarnock Gasworks, will be carefully watched, and it is not unlikely that a revolution in the methods of "firing" will follow.

SOLDERING BY ELECTRICITY.—A recent American patent is a soldering iron, formed of a handle through which two conductors pass, and project for some distance beyond; between the ends of these is fixed a piece of platinum, which becomes heated on the passage of the electric current. One of the conductors is separated near the upper end of the handle, and bridged by a button made partly of electrical conducting material and partly of insulating material, so that by turning the button the circuit may be completed or broken at will. Another device separates the two halves of the handle, and so the two conductors, by a spring, so that to complete the circuit it is only necessary to close the two halves together.

INOXIDATION OF IRON.—A new method of protecting iron from the effect of the atmosphere has been devised by a Mr. Ward. The new process consists in the combined application of silicates and heat, and is termed the "inoxidising" process. This is the basis of several subsequent processes for ornamenting the surface of the metal. The inoxidising process consists in coating the cast or wrought-iron objects with a silicate composition, which is applied either by means of a brush or by dipping the iron in a bath of the solution. The coating quickly dries upon the objects, which are then passed through a furnace heated according to the nature of the articles under treatment. The silicate composition is thus fused and absorbed into the pores of the metal, becoming homogeneous with it. Upon cooling the articles treated are found to be covered with a dull black coating, which, it is stated, is found not to suffer change from long exposure to the atmosphere, nor to disintegrate or separate from the surfaces to which it has become applied. The ornamentation is affected by coating and furnacing the articles by the combination of the silicate composition with vitrifiable colours.



[ENGAGED.]

A WINSOME WIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"From Her Own Lips," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXII.

EPHANIAH PUDDLEWICK.

Pinched in body, warped in limb,
He hated the bad world that loved not him.

THE party sat round the doctor's comfortable fire somewhat late in the evening enjoying the most free-and-easy of after-dinner gossips. It was late summer still, but there were few evenings on that exposed moor when a fire could not be borne, and Dr. Brandspeth was of the chilly order of men and loved the light of blazing wood, even when his windows were open and the sweet scent of flowers coming in on the breeze.

The two ladies were thoroughly glad they had accepted his invitation. They had no idea what a fund of amusement they should find in that grey old house, nor how fully Selina could provide for their comfort.

Mr. Warburton had offered to ride into Liskeard after the rain was over for anything they might need, but they would not hear of it; their tourists' dresses were all that they needed if Dr. Brandspeth would allow them to sit down to table in them, and his housekeeper had shown herself so full of resources that their comfort for the night was amply secured.

"We have to be provisioned and furnished like a beleaguered garrison," the doctor said, with a smile, when Lady Beckenham remarked enthusiastically on his housekeeper's prompt attention to their smallest needs. "Selina has had people on her hands for a week before now without the chance of getting a change of clothes. A party of my friends were snowed up here with me once, and we were

seriously thinking of casting lots and eating one another, before provisions arrived. Literally we were reduced to bread and salt pork."

Lady Beckenham made a grimace and the rest laughed.

"Does that often happen?" Lady Carita asked.

"Once or twice in a century perhaps. I have heard my father speak of nearly the same sort of thing in his early days. Civilisation is nearer to us now than it used to be, and food has not to come so far as it did then."

A charming man the ladies pronounced Dr. Brandspeth to be, and wondered to themselves why he had never married. They wove all sorts of romances about him in their own minds. But they were all wrong; Julius Brandspeth was still single and likely to be so. Not that any woman had jilted him, or any love passion come between him and his dreams. It was simply that he had put science into the first place in his heart, and he was well and carefully tended by the housekeeper, who had cared for his father before him, and been the friend as well as the servant of his mother.

He liked the society of the other sex, and was delighted when he met a woman, as he sometimes did, who could sympathise with him in his delight over the beauties that surrounded the home he loved so dearly. He brought out all his treasures to show his guests—priceless antiquities from the many spots in the neighbourhood where such things are to be found, and old manuscripts and plates, till they wondered no more at the refinement and grace of his mind.

A man who could love and treasure such things could not be other than a scholar and a gentleman. He told them stories too, weird and wild, as most of the Cornish legends are, and sang them quaint old ballads to a somewhat worn but sweet-sounding piano, till Lady Carita felt her cheeks wet with sympathetic tears, and Lady Beckenham, who rather prided herself on not being sentimental, felt a lump in her throat and a moisture in her eyes.

"You are lost here, Dr. Brandspeth," she said; "you should come to London."

"I should be lost there," he replied, with a smile, "and I am vain enough to think that the people here would be lost without me. Do you know I am 'the doctor' par excellence for miles round?"

"I can quite understand that," Lady Beckenham said. "You would be that anywhere."

"Your ladyship is flattering. It is not to any special merit that I owe the proud distinction. My father was the only medical man in a very large district, and the country folk are good enough to think that his mantle has fallen on me. I could not leave this simple place. The goodwill and love of my neighbours are very dear to me."

He seemed to speak almost to himself in the last few words, and no one made any reply. Selina created a diversion by first knocking at the door and then putting her head into the room.

"Am I wanted, Selina?" the doctor asked.

"If you please, sir."

"Who is it?"

"Zeph, sir."

"What does he want?"

"He won't say, sir—he's——"

"Drunk?"

"No, sir, mud and cloam all over, and wet to the skin. His clothes are all torn, and I think he has been fighting; anyway his face is hurt."

"I never knew Zeph fight, and I should be sorry to think anyone about here would fight with him," Dr. Brandspeth said. "Make him comfortable, Selina, and give him something to eat. I will be out to him directly."

Selina withdrew, and the doctor turned on his friends with an excuse for Selina's fashion of announcing his visitors.

"We are very primitive here," he said. "It was a great concession to my guests that she knocked at the door at all. I have tried to civilise her in the matter, but it is hopeless. I should like you to see the man who is waiting for me now. He is one of our local oddities, but

I am afraid from her description of his plight that he is hardly presentable."

"Who is he?" asked Leonard Warburton.

"His name sounded odd to say the least of it." "His full style and title is 'Zephaniah Puddlewick.' Why Zephaniah and why Puddlewick no one knows. He is a parish-bred orphan."

"And the parish bestowed the names on him, I suppose?"

"It did, and must be proud of its inventive faculties, I should think. He is familiarly known as Zeph—Old Zeph—though he is by no means an old man. My father found him by the wayside and transferred him to the keeping of the guardians."

"What a queer romance!" Lady Beckenham said. "What is he like? Is he handsome?"

"Anything uglier could hardly be imagined," the doctor replied. "He is deformed, and squints, and his hair is, or rather was, red—the sun and wind have made it an indescribable colour from long exposure. He never sleeps under a roof when he can help it. The people about here look upon him as uncanny, and indeed there is something more of the wild beast than human being about him. He is an interesting subject for study."

"A dangerous one, I should think, from your account," Mr. Warburton remarked.

"Not to those who treat him well. Zeph is a true child of nature. It sometimes seems to me as if the very fact of his having been found on the hill yonder—he must have been of gipsy origin, I fancy, or he would never have been there—has given him a love for it. His favourite den is a hole, a little below where we were when the storm broke out. He will remain there for days at a stretch, only coming out to seek for food. The country folk believe he holds communion with the evil one up there, and that witches and warlocks hold high revel in that same hole. The very dread ensures Zeph undisputed possession of it."

Selina put her head in again at this moment.

"Zeph's going, sir," she said, "and cursing too, I think. Won't you come to him?"

To be cursed by Zeph was something terrible in Selina's eyes. She was something in advance of her neighbours in general enlightenment through her companionship with the cultured gentleman her master. But she was sufficiently superstitious still to believe devoutly in the evil eye and various charms and incantations. No persuasion of the doctor's could induce her to take down the horse shoe from over the back door. Did she not pick it up herself, and had she not been exempt when nearly all the neighbourhood was bewitched, owing to her lucky possession of the treasure?

It was in vain for her master to point out to her that the bewitching was an epidemic and that the freedom from it enjoyed by his household was due in a great measure to her own scrupulous cleanliness and attention to his directions. Selina believed in her horse shoe and kept triumphant possession of it.

"I'll come this minute," he replied to her appeal. "I had no idea Zeph was in a hurry."

He apologised to his guests and went to the capacious kitchen, where the man he had spoken of sat evidently in the last stage of impatience. Ugly at the best of times, Zeph looked almost repulsive now by reason of the blood which had trickled from a cut on his forehead and the mud and green slime which covered him from head to foot.

"Why, Zeph," the doctor said, "what has happened? What have you been doing?"

"I've done naught. Send her away, I've a word to say to you if you'll listen to it, if you won't I must go my way."

"Of course I will listen, Zeph; you ought to know that."

"She said you wouldn't. She said you were busy and told me to go home and get to bed. I've a deal to do before I can get to bed. There's money to earn."

"Indeed, I'm glad to hear it. Now then, Selina is gone, what do you want with me?"

Zeph was generally garrulous, but he came straight to the point this time, and told the

doctor what he wanted. His story was not long, and Dr. Brandspeth went back to the dining-room with rather a preoccupied face.

"Zeph really wanted me on business," he said. "I am afraid I shall have to leave you for a little while. I may be back in a few minutes, I may be an hour. Mr. Warburton, will you try and keep the ladies amused till I return? And please call Selina if there is anything you want. I regret exceedingly that I am obliged to go out, but I must."

"Then it is for someone else the man wants you. I thought your servant said he was hurt himself."

"Oh, no; that is, not to speak of. He has cut his face, and I daresay that a great many people would think it enough to worry a doctor about. Zeph is a staid in his way, and thinks little of hurts which would cripple some people. He is someone else's messenger to-night, and coming here he must have fallen down, and our boulders and flints are not soft things to fall on."

"No, indeed," Leonard Warburton said; and the doctor went his way, leaving his friend with a curious feeling that there was something more in the background than they had heard of. He could not tell what gave him the impression—there was nothing so very unusual in a country doctor being sent for after dark, and yet he felt that they had not heard the last of the man Zeph or his mysterious message to Dr. Brandspeth.

They drew their chairs closer together when they were left alone, and Leonard Warburton took Lady Carita's hand in his and asked Lady Beckenham if she had been told of what had befallen them that day—they had agreed to go through life together and wanted her approval of their compact.

Lady Beckenham had nothing but kind words to say. She gave Mr. Warburton her hearty good wishes, and held him exonerated from all mercenary motives.

"You will have to run the gauntlet of the world's tongues on that score," she said. "It is not everyone who will believe you as I do, it is enough that we three know it—Arthur, Carita, and I. She could not have chosen better, and I know Arthur will say so too when he comes home."

"But for him I should never have ventured. He bade me ask for the boon and I have won it. Can I ever be grateful enough?"

Dr. Brandspeth was absent a full hour, and returned looking something serious. He did not say much about the patient he had been called to see, but they gathered, they scarcely knew how, that it was an accident to one of the neighbours and that Zeph had been unnecessarily mysterious in his mission about it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MIS DUBAND'S DILEMMA.

And I oft have heard defended
That little said is soonest mended.

"VERY quiet, my dear, but I can't quite make her out. She's rather proud and haughty like."

Thus said Mrs. Peterby, of 9, Amanda Villas, Larch Lane, Camberwell, to her neighbour, Miss Prince, anent the lady she called her first floor.

"Amanda Villas, Larch Lane," is an eminently genteel row of houses, with tiny gardens in front and bow windows showing a great expanse of lace or leno curtains and many pots of flowers. Indeed the windows are so completely furnished as to give the idea that the furniture ends there and that the rooms inside are of the barest description.

A struggling place is Amanda Villas, a place affected by widows and that melancholy class of people who have seen better days and are always ailing the fast. Hardly a housekeeper there that did not let part of her house, and many of them let it nearly all, making it a matter of wonder where the families themselves lived.

Mrs. Peterby and Miss Prince, her next-door neighbour, were sworn friends when their interests did not clash, and bitter enemies when both houses were empty and someone in search of arcadian simplicity and suburban repose wanted apartments and preferred one to the other.

They were not at feud now. Miss Prince was full, she had a "lady and gentleman" in her first floor, a "gent" in the parlours, and a "party" in the little back room she usually reserved for herself.

But she liked to make hay while the sun shone, and betook herself to a turn-up bedstead in her kitchen and the company of the mice and blackbeetles, of both which domestic delights she was intensely afraid.

Her neighbour had been full too till yesterday, when she had got rid of some exceedingly noisy people who had scandalised the propriety of the villas by coming home at all hours of the night and waking the echoes with untimely music.

They were a rollicking, happy-go-lucky lot who broke all before them and lived anyhow. But they were of the music-hall branch of the profession and held money cheaply as long as it came in.

They paid for everything, and though Mrs. Peterby declared they made her hair stand on end she was very sorry when they left her with an empty house and her great, hungry boys to feed all at her own expense.

The person whom she described as "very quiet" was a young lady who had been brought to her by a cabman who had been a chum of her late husband's, and who often put a little in her way by recommending her lodgers.

He had driven a young lady with a cab load of luggage to her door and asked her to find room for her. She was in great trouble. Somehow or other a box forming part of her belongings had gone astray on the railroad and was not to be heard of anywhere.

It was a most unfortunate loss, for it contained all her papers and credentials, she said, though luckily not all her money. She had no friends in London, and did not know what to do. Would Mrs. Peterby take her in? Mrs. Peterby hesitated.

Young ladies without references were not the most eligible of lodgers in a general way, but the girl, for she seemed little more, offered her two weeks' rent in advance, and the water-rate was pressing and she could not resist.

Besides, the story of the box was all true. Her friend, the cabman, had been a witness of the girl's distress at the station, and had helped in the inquiries that had been made about it. It had been telegraphed for and traced as far as a certain point on the journey which she declared she had come, and then it had disappeared. "A large black portmanteau" it was said to be, but it might have sunk into the earth for all that could be heard of it.

The young lady gave her name as, Miss Durand. She was not sure how long she should remain in London, she said, it might be a long time or only a very few weeks. She was waiting for important letters which would decide her future movements.

Somehow Mrs. Peterby gathered that she was engaged in some lawsuit and was awaiting the issue of it. Miss Durand never said so in as many words, but she did not deny it when her landlady hinted at such being the fact.

The good lady would have liked to know a great deal more, but she was baffled. She was a good hand at pumping, but Miss Durand was too much for her. She paid no attention to any insinuations and open questions she flatly declined to answer.

She was very quiet, and kept to her own room. She seemed to want for nothing, but there was a curious manner about her that Mrs. Peterby tried to fathom in vain. She seemed frightened—at least that was the interpretation her landlady put on a somewhat distrustful manner and startled expression visible in her eyes.

She was decidedly nice-looking, Amanda Villas agreed; very fair and pale—too pale almost, with brown hair that seemed as if it

would like to escape from its somewhat prim banding and break into curls.

She dressed with extreme plainness, but Mrs. Peterby caught a glimpse one day of more resplendent raiment when she surprised her with one of her large trunks open.

She declared to Miss Prince that she had seen a pink silk dress and a brown satin the like of which did not often grace Amanda Villas. There were lace too and sundry trifles that seemed to point to Miss Durand having seen better days, like the rest of them.

"Ah, she's an actress," Miss Prince decided, when she heard all these glories. "Their dresses are their stock in trade. She's out of an engagement perhaps and resting. I thought there was something stagey about her."

Miss Prince thought nothing of the sort, for she had only seen the person in question once, and that in the simplest of walking costumes, but it showed her wisdom and superior knowledge to be able to decide so definitely on a point which puzzled her neighbour.

Mrs. Peterby was not going to be content with Miss Prince's opinion. She asked Miss Durand the very first time she had occasion to speak to her whether she was an actress.

The girl lifted up her head somewhat haughtily and a slight tinge of colour came into her white cheeks.

"No," she replied. "Why do you ask?"

Mrs. Peterby had no answer ready, and she was somewhat confused.

"Have you any objection to taking professional people?"

"No, miss, it isn't that. I have just had a lot, and a noisy lot they were, though they paid me well enough, I'll do 'em the justice to say that. It was—"

"It could have been nothing but curiosity then," Miss Durand replied, coldly, "and I never answer impertinent questions. If the neighbourhood has any scruples about actresses, you may inform your friends that I have never been on the stage, and have not the slightest intention of going there."

Mrs. Peterby stammered an apology in great perturbation, but her lodger stopped her, haughtily.

"There is no need to say anything further," she said. "If it does not suit you to keep a lodger about whom you know nothing, and whose affairs you don't quite understand, I am ready to seek another home. If I remain here you will be good enough to question me no further either directly or indirectly. I am answerable for my proceedings to no one."

Mrs. Peterby got herself out of the room somehow, feeling, as she expressed it to Miss Prince afterwards, "struck all of a heap." Miss Durand had shown that she had a spirit, and for the future she would be let alone.

It was lucky for her that a dress hung before the keyhole of her bedroom door, whither she betook herself after the brief conversation with her landlady. Mrs. Peterby would have been considerably astonished could she have seen her walking up and down with her hands clasped over her head and her whole bearing full of wild excitement.

"What shall I do?" she muttered. "What do they think? What do they suspect? Oh, if I only had that box! Where is it, or into whose hands can it have fallen? I must wait—wait till some tidings of it come to me. I dare not think what was in it. I must not think. I shall go mad if I do. I dare not have anyone to live with me, and I feel as if I should go mad in the long nights, the horrible hours of darkness when all the air is peopled with—"

She broke out into wild sobs, and, throwing herself on the bed, she fought out a fit of hysterics as best she could, stifling her sobs and cries in the bedclothes till she was something calmer.

It was no wonder her cheeks were pale and her eyes glittering, and that she sometimes slept till far on in the day, the deep, dreamless sleep of exhaustion. She told her landlady she was a bad sleeper, and burned a light at night. But Mrs. Peterby had no idea of the vigils that were kept in her back drawing-room, or the weary hours that Ada Durand spent looking out of her

window into the blank darkness, striving to see a way out of the difficulties which surrounded her.

"It's my belief she'll be ill," Mrs. Peterby said one morning when Miss Durand had declared herself too ill to get up, and requested that her breakfast might be taken up to her bedroom, where she tasted nothing but a cup of tea, and then said she thought she would try and sleep. "She's that feverish and odd, and she's as thin as a skeleton. I wish she had some friends to come to her, that I do."

"And hasn't she any?"

"Not a soul—at least she says so. I shouldn't like her to die in my house, and really sometimes I think she will. She's something on her mind, I am sure."

"Never mind so long as she pays her rent. It's got nothing to do with you," Miss Prince said. She was much more practical than her friend, and had no sentiment in her composition.

Her lodgers might die if they liked so long as they paid their way. She would do all she could for them, but she had no idea of putting herself out of the way on account of their concerns. Mrs. Peterby was rather different. She really felt an interest in her young lodger, and though Ada Durand did not respond in any way to her kindly advances she strove with all her might to make her comfortable.

She went up to her room with the paper, which Miss Durand always took, and left her eagerly looking over it as if she were searching for something. All at once Ada Durand gave a strange, choking sort of gasp, and Mrs. Peterby ran to her side.

"Is anything the matter, miss?" she asked.

There was no reply for a moment, and then the girl gasped, wildly:

"It is the hand of Heaven—the hand of Heaven!" and bursting into wild laughter fell back on her pillow insensible.

For a long time the swoon resisted all her efforts, and seemed more like death than fainting in its intensity. But presently the large eyes opened, the lips quivered, and Ada Durand came to herself.

She was very ill, she admitted, when her landlady questioned her, and would see a doctor if she did not get better directly. Perhaps her fainting fit was the turning point of what had been troubling her, and she would mend now. Indeed, she felt better already.

"I thought it was something in the paper that upset you, miss," Mrs. Peterby said. "It seemed to come upon you sudden like after you had read it."

"Why, I did not read it at all. I was looking for an advertisement I hoped to find, and I lost myself all of a sudden. Leave the paper there, please. I shall feel well enough to read it presently. I am a great deal better now."

That she certainly was, and came downstairs in the afternoon looking more lively and satisfied than she had done for some time, and Mrs. Peterby got the reversion of the "Telegraph" and searched it over and over in the vain attempt to discover what had caused the illness of Miss Durand.

She could find nothing. There was the ordinary complement of news, rather more of horrors, perhaps, than generally comes in one day. A railway accident in France, ghastly enough to satisfy the utmost appetite for horrors, a collision at sea; a colliery catastrophe wherein over a hundred bread-winners had gone to their account; and various other items which all had their interest for someone, but none that she could specially fix upon as having been of special importance to Ada Durand.

CHAPTER XXIV.

NOBODY KNOWS.

And I could read and see
Its inmost mystery
And breach of law;
Its guilty passion strong,
Its weakness hidden long,
And breach of law.

If there was a mystery in the life of Mrs. Peterby's lodger it was a very quiet one. Ada

Durand went the way of any ordinary young lady, a little quieter and sadder perhaps than most girls of her age, for her landlady declared that she could not have been more than eighteen or so, but doing nothing to excite any comment except the one fact of her living alone and having no friends.

She was not so reticent after awhile about herself, and spoke of what she wanted to do pretty openly. She had been out of health, she said, when she came to Amanda Villas, and the loss of her box, of which nothing had ever been heard, had so upset her that for awhile she hardly knew what to do.

"You see all my credentials were in it," she said to her landlady. "What use is it my telling anyone who I am if I have no proof to offer that I can teach or do anything for my bread? I have no friends to back me up."

"But the people who educated you would make it all right for you, miss," Mrs. Peterby suggested. She was not without some common sense, the worthy lady, and it seemed to her that the best way of proceeding would have been to go to the place where the credentials first came from and get more.

She had gathered from her lodger that she was an orphan and had been educated with the proceeds of a legacy left her by a distant relation who had long been dead. She had been in a good situation, but had left it through the death of her pupil's mother. It was to this lady that her landlady wondered that she did not apply.

"So I would," she said, in answer to her question—"so I have indeed; but they and all who knew me are in the wilds of America. Mr. Carisbrook was in San Francisco when I heard from him last, and the school is given up. I have written to everybody I can think of, but I have not received any replies yet."

Mrs. Peterby was satisfied; Miss Prince was not, and told her friend that she wished she might find that things were all right. She did not like Miss Durand much, she was too haughty for her. Everyone else seemed to like her. She was remarkably modest and unassuming, and had such a sweet voice and manner.

The clergyman's wife—for Mrs. Peterby was a model church-goer, and always carried her griefs to her spiritual adviser—was charmed with the grace of her bearing and her evident cultivation, and would have made quite a pet and protégée of her if Ada Durand would have responded to her advances. But she would not, and the lady's husband, who perhaps was a little more far-seeing than his wife, was not sorry.

"Be civil to her of course, my dear," he said one day when his wife was expatiating on Ada's meekness and goodness. "I don't want to damp your ardour in doing good, but there are plenty of people that we know that want help, and we don't know this Miss Durand. She may be all you say, and all she says herself, but don't make too much of her."

"You are always so suspicious, Reginald," the lady replied, to which her husband remarked:

"Not suspicious, my dear. A little more worldly-wise perhaps, that is all."

"I am sure you would like Miss Durand, if you knew her," Mrs. Fothergill persisted. "She is such a sweet, gentle creature."

"I am willing to admit all her virtues, my dear, so you do not see too much of her," Mr. Fothergill said, quietly.

He had taken Ada Durand's measure better than his somewhat impulsive wife had done, and was not disposed to admit that young lady to any sort of intimacy.

She might have been at Mrs. Peterby's some six weeks, always paying her way and keeping quiet, waiting, as she said, for the American letters, which never came.

No one knew any more about her than they had done on the day of her arrival, and Mrs. Peterby had never seen any of her boxes open since the day when she had caught a glimpse of the glories of the pink silk dress.

One day—a fine, bright one, though winter was coming on with rapid strides—she went out for a walk. She did not go far; she never

seemed to care for walking much, and she liked the queer, half-rural, half-London aspect of the green.

She would sit there for hours sometimes, when the weather was bright, sometimes reading, but more often thinking, and not always pleasantly, to judge by the expression of her face.

The attendant policeman had come to know her and give her "Good morning" or "Good evening," as the case might be, and he had taken upon himself to find out where she lived and what her name was. It was no special business of his just then, but there was no knowing when the knowledge might come in useful and the forethought of "the active and intelligent," etc., be commented upon in the papers.

He saw her to-day and wished her good morning, and remarked on the fineness of the day. She answered him in her usual gentle voice, and sat down for a minute or two notwithstanding the sharpness of the air. Then he remarked that a man whom he had not seen before seemed to be watching her, and presently went up to her as if to beg.

The man was a stranger and somewhat repulsive looking, and the policeman hovered about, thinking she might be frightened. He did beg of her, for she started up and gave him some money, looking scared and surprised.

"Now then," the officer said, sauntering up, "you be off. The lady don't want you."

"No, I daresay not," the man replied, in a strange, uncouth accent that was hardly understandable. "But she'll give me summat."

"She won't, if she takes my advice; and you just get out of here, or you'll find yourself in the station."

"The lady won't let me go there," the man said, leering at her. "She wouldn't have the heart."

"Do you know him, miss?" the policeman asked of Ada Durand, whose face was as white as that of a corpse.

"No. I never saw him before in my life," she replied, and truthfully, for she never had.

"What has he been saying to you?"

"Nothing that I can make out. Don't let him come after me, please; he frightens me."

"That he shan't, miss, nor after anyone. I'll look after him."

The tramp—for he was one—did not seem to have any intention of following Ada Durand, for he only laughed when the policeman warned him after she had walked away.

"I don't want her, master," he said. "I did beg of her, for I was starving almost; but she'd no call to be frightened, unless it was at my looks. I ain't a beauty."

"You're only fit for a show at a fair," was the answer of the guardian of the public peace.

"I should advise you to make yourself scarce if you don't want to be taken up. Clear out, or I shall have to do my duty, you know."

He was a good-natured creature, in the main, this blue-coated despot, and had no desire to make a case out of the miserable creature who did not seem to know anything of London or London ways.

He watched him out of the green and saw him turn along the road leading to Peckham Rye, and went his own way content.

"He hasn't gone after her anyway," he said to himself. "A little thing frightens a woman; she looked ready to faint."

Miss Durand went home, giving Miss Prince a pleasant smile and a kindly greeting as she entered the house. Miss Prince found a good deal of time to take the air over her front gate, and usually contrived to be there when her neighbours' lodgers went in and out.

"You look but poorly, Miss Durand," she said, as the girl went in. "I hope it is only the cold air."

"It is more than that," was the prompt reply. "I have had some news. I have been expecting it so long that it has quite upset me."

Her voice rang out clear and strong, and the inquisitive maiden lady had no means of knowing how thick and fast the heart was beating under the simple cloth jacket the girl wore.

Ada Durand went in and straight up to her room. In a few minutes she rang her bell.

"Tell Mrs. Peterby I want to speak to her," she said to the little maid of all work who presented herself with a very dirty face in answer to her summons.

"Missis is out, ma'am," was the answer to her command.

"Out? Where?"

"I don't know, ma'am. I was to say, please, that she might be gone an hour, and would you please to have the cold fowl hashed for your dinner, or—"

"I shan't be here to dinner; I am going out too. I will leave a note for Mrs. Peterby in case I don't come back as soon as I expect. Go and fetch me a cab."

"An'ansome, miss?"

"No, a four-wheeler. I must take something with me."

The girl had some little distance to go to get a cab. Amanda Villas had no cabstand conveniently near, and by the time she returned Miss Durand had her bonnet on again and was ready to start. She had written a note to her landlady explaining her sudden departure, and there was an enclosure in it, for she put it there in the presence of the servant, and bade her mark that she did so.

Then she went downstairs with a light box in her hand, and encountered Miss Prince taking in some fish from a boy at the gate. That estimable lady stayed to hear all she could as to where Miss Durand might be going, but she gathered nothing.

"Where to, ma'am?" the cabman asked, touching his hat, and his fare only replied:

"Presently. Drive on."

The man understood, and with a laugh and a saucy look at the discomfited Miss Prince he drove rapidly away.

"Well, I never," was all that lady could say, as she shut herself in with more than necessary violence. "Pretty goings-on I must say. I hope Mrs. Peterby will never regret having taken that woman into her house."

Mrs. Peterby did not seem to regret it at all, and she called on Miss Prince with the whole story.

"I'm as sorry to lose her as ever was," she said, "for I have lost her, I can see that. She's gone to the friends she has been waiting so long for letters from."

Mrs. Peterby's grammar was obscure, to say the least of it, but Miss Prince, though priding herself on her superior education, understood what she meant and did not remark on it, as she might have done if she had not been so anxious to hear what came next.

"She has acted most honourable," Mrs. Peterby went on. "Here's her letter, I am vexed I was out when she went."

There was not much to be made of the letter.

"DEAR MRS PETERBY,—I AM SO SORRY you are out, for I must go away directly. The letter I wanted so much has come, and I have to go and meet Mr. Carisbrook at once. I am so thankful to know he is in England, for he is a true friend and will help me out of all my troubles. I hope to be back to-night, but in case of anything happening to prevent me I enclose the rent and a week over for the trouble I am giving you; anyway you shall hear from me to-morrow. I shall never forget all your kindness, and believe me, your truly grateful,

ADA DURAND."

Miss Durand did not come back, and the next day a commissionaire appeared with a cab and a note from the young lady demanding her boxes.

"Where is she?" asked Mrs. Peterby.

"With an American family at some hotel, I forget the name of it," the man replied. "The gentleman's name is Carisbrook, I know that much. She gave me his card."

"But if you don't know the name of the hotel how can you take her boxes?" asked Miss Prince, who was assisting at the interview.

"I am to take them straight to the station, ma'am," was the quiet reply. "They are going to leave London."

"What station?" Miss Prince asked, but the man did not answer, or at any rate she did not catch what he said.

It was none of his business to answer impertinent questions. Ada Durand was gone and Amanda Villas was none the wiser as to her whereabouts.

(To be Continued.)

OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS.

A FAMOUS QUACK.—Towards the end of last century Dr. Graham flourished in London. He opened what he called a Temple of Health, in the Adelphi. Among other things he promised people that they should "live with health, honour and happiness in this world for at least a hundred years." One of the means for insuring this was the frequent use of mud baths; and the doctor was to be seen on stated occasions immersed in mud to the chin. He was accompanied by a singularly beautiful woman (whose beauty appears on the canvas of Reynolds and Romney in the Portrait Gallery at Kensington) whom he called the Goddess of Health. This was Emma Harte, once a nursemaid, afterwards the wife of Sir W. Hamilton, and herself well known in connection with the life of Lord Nelson; herself a beautiful, fascinating, but unscrupulous and evil woman, who, after a short season of glory, died miserably and in poverty at Calais. While Vestina remained up to the chin in the bath, she had her hair elaborately dressed in the then prevailing fashion—with powder, flowers, feathers, and ropes of pearl. Graham enjoyed the services of two gigantic porters, whom he stationed at the door in the most brilliant liveries covered with gold lace. His rooms at night were superbly lighted by wax, and nothing spared to attract visitors. He had "an officiating junior priest"—as he termed him—a young medical man, who afterwards became Dr. Mitford, and was the father of the famous authoress. Graham's expenses were always large and lavish; they continued when his popularity declined; and at last he died poor in the neighbourhood of Glasgow. He was nearly the last of the unblushing quack doctors.

SALE OF A WIFE.—The "Annual Register," for 1832, contains an account of a singular wife-sale which took place on the 7th of April in that year. Joseph Thomson, a farmer, had been married for three years without finding his happiness advanced, and he and his wife at length agreed to separate. It is a prevalent notion amongst the rude and ignorant in England that a man can sell his wife by public auction; but of course such a sale has no legal effect whatever, and is only an outrage on decency. However, Thomson, acting under the belief just mentioned, came into Carlisle with his wife, and by the bellman announced that he was about to sell her. At twelve, noon, the sale commenced in the presence of a large number of persons. Thomson then placed his wife on a large oak chair with a halter of straw round her neck. He then spoke as follows: "Gentlemen, I have to offer to your notice my wife, Mary Ann Thomson, otherwise Williams, whom I mean to sell to the highest and fairest bidder. Gentlemen, it is her wish as well as mine to part for ever. She has been to me only a born serpent. . . . Gentlemen, I speak the truth from my heart when I say, may Heaven deliver us from troublesome wives and frolicsome women. Avoid them as you would a mad dog, a roaring lion, a loaded pistol, cholera morbus, Mount Etna, or any other pestilential thing in nature. . . . Now I will explain the sunny side of her. She can read novels and milk cows; she can laugh and weep with the same ease that you could take a glass of ale when thirsty. Indeed, gentlemen, she can make butter and scold the maid; she can sing Moore's melodies and plait her frills and caps; she cannot make rum, gin, or whisky, but she is a good judge of the quality from long experience in tasting them. I therefore offer her, with all her perfections and imperfections, for the sum of

fifty shillings. The account concludes by informing us that, after waiting about an hour, Thomson knocked down the lot to one Henry Mears for twenty shillings and a Newfoundland dog. Then they parted in perfect good temper—Mears and the woman going one way, Thomson and the dog another!

ADVICE.—Some sage has observed that if a man wish to offend his friends let him give them advice. Would a lover know the surest way by which to lose his mistress? Let him give advice. Here is an illustration in point. The friendship of two young ladies, though apparently founded on the rock of eternal attachment, terminated abruptly in the following manner. "My dearest girl, I do not think your figure well suited for dancing, and as a sincere friend of yours I advise you to refrain from that amusement in future." The other, naturally affected by such a mark of sincerity, replied, "I feel very much obliged to you, my dear, for your advice; such a proof of your friendship demands some return. I would sincerely recommend you to relinquish your singing, as some of your upper notes resemble the melodious squeaking of the feline race!" However, after all, everything depends upon the character of the adviser and the spirit in which the advice is given; and this little tale—though good and valuable as far as it goes—must be taken with a grain of salt.

STORY OF THE ABBEY OF METTEN.—Metten, a Benedictine abbey, was founded by Charlemagne in compliance with the request of a holy hermit named Hutto, whom he found here employed in cutting up wood, and who excited the great monarch's astonishment—so the old legend runs—by hanging up his hatchet to a sunbeam! A few miles up the valley which opens out behind Metten stands the castle of Eck, a feudal stronghold, almost unaltered after the lapse of six centuries. The lowest vault of the donjon keep was opened a few years back, and displayed to view the horrors of a prison of the middle ages. The floor was covered with mutilated fragments of human skeletons, and in a corner, upon a mouldering chair, sat a human figure, which, on being approached, fell into dust.

CURIOUS WAGER.—(March 4, 1741.) "We hear from Leeds that two eminent tradesmen of that place being in company together, valued themselves much upon their characters; and in order to bring the discussion properly to an issue, laid a wager of a £100 each, to be determined by the poll of the freeholders of the borough; and accordingly the poll began last Monday sen'night, and the books were closed on Saturday evening, when it stood thus:—Mr. J. M., 135. Mr. J. F., 3; Majority, 132!"—Derby Mercury.

WASHINGTON IRVING AT AN INN.—Washington Irving, writing under the name of "Geoffrey Crayon," thus describes his repose at a comfortable hostelry at Stratford-on-Avon: "To a homeless man who has no spot on this wide world which he can truly call his own there is a momentary feeling of something like independence and territorial consequence, when, after a weary day's travel, he kicks off his boots, thrusts his feet into slippers and stretches himself before an inn fire. Let the world without go as it may, let kingdoms rise or fall, so long as he has the wherewithal to pay his bill, he is, for the time being, the very monarch of all he surveys. The arm-chair is his throne, the poker his sceptre, and the little parlour, of some twelve feet square, his undisputed empire. It is a morsel of certainty, snatched from the midst of the uncertainties of life; it is a sunny moment gleaming out kindly on a cloudy day; and he who has advanced some way on the pilgrimage of existence knows the importance of husbanding even morsels and moments of enjoyment. "Shall I not take mine ease in my inn?" thought I, as I gave the fire a stir, lolled back in my elbow chair, and cast a complacent look about the little parlour of the Red Horse at Stratford-on-Avon. A few inns of the old sort—pleasant places—here and there survive; as a rule, however, they are rapidly disappearing, like the many good and amiable things of old; but neither the modern gin palace nor the colossal hotel is exactly an improvement on the hostelry of our fathers.

Washington Irving's words would hardly apply. The poetry is gone, and with it much of the quiet pleasure he describes.

ELOPEMENT OF A COUNTESS WITH A GIPSY.—The following anecdote will interest readers of Sir Walter Scott's romance of "Guy Mannering." John, sixth Earl of Cassilis, commonly termed "the grave and solemn earl," married first the Lady Jane Hamilton, daughter of Thomas, first Earl of Haddington. It is said that this match took place contrary to the inclinations of the young lady, whose affections had been previously engaged by a certain Sir John Faa, of Dunbar, who was neither grave nor solemn, and moreover handsomer than his successful rival. While Lord Cassilis, who by the way was a very zealous Puritan, was absent on some mission to England Sir John with his followers repaired to Cassilis, where the young lady then resided, and persuaded her to elope with him to England. As ill luck would have it, the earl returned home before the lovers could cross the border; he pursued and overtook them, and in the conflict all the masquerade gipsies were slain save one, and the weeping countess brought back to her husband's mansion, where she remained till a dungeon was prepared for her near the village of Maybole, where she passed her life in humble sorrow and devotion. This is one version of the story, still very current in the country where the elopement took place, but it is not supported by the tenor of the ancient ballad on the subject, which was composed by the only survivor of Faa's party. This pronounces the fair countess guilty of having eloped with a genuine gipsy, though compelled in some degree to that low-lived indiscretion by certain wicked charms and philtres of which Faa and his party are said to have possessed the secret. It is not now possible to fix the precise date of Lady Cassilis's elopement with the "gipsy laddie." She was born in the year 1607, and is said to have died young; but if she ran off with her lover, during her husband's first journey to England as a deputy to the famous "Assembly of Divines" at Westminster in 1643, she could not even then have been in her first youth; and it is certain that she lived long enough in her confinement at Maybole to work a piece of tapestry representing her unhappy flight—but she is mounted beside her lover on a superb white courser, and none of the retinue bear any resemblance to gipsies. Things of this kind, however, have occasionally occurred in the history of noble families, both Scottish and English.

AN INJURED WOMAN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A Double Engagement," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE TWO ALLIES.

Love's sweet springtime hath fled;
Hope's promise-hours have flown;
My every joy has vanished,
And left despair alone.

LADY CLARA on arriving in London took up her quarters at Pincey's private and family hotel, as the proprietors called it, one of the quiet places that our forefathers loved, but now being fast obliterated by the advance of those gigantic buildings where a whole community can be lodged and boarded, where the patrons all have numbers, not names, where electric bells that wake one's nerves to hear their trembling jingling have superseded the old-fashioned cup and clapper and the servants trained like an army and almost as numerous.

Pincey's turned up its nose at modern improvements and only tolerated the "best people." The sporting man, so flush and free with his money, would not have been received. Had he presumed to ask for rooms Pincey's would have been "full." No needy adventurer dared to look into it, and commercial men, so

gifted with impudence, would have been abashed in its quiet, solid aristocratic precincts. Pincey's had people of its own and encouraged no others.

Vesey Sutherland also took a room there, and he and Lady Clara dined together in her ladyship's private room. There was no harm in that, for, although so near each other in years, they were aunt and nephew, and Pincey's was satisfied.

"I wonder if there is anything in the evening paper," said Vesey, when dinner was over. "Shall I go and see?"

"That is an excuse for a smoke I suppose," Lady Clara said, "but you may have your cigarette here if you like. I think I will take one myself."

"Do you really indulge?" he asked.

"Occasionally," she said, and cigarettes were lighted just after coffee was served.

Lady Clara was very pale and her eyes were restless, but there was nothing new in these signs. She had shown them from the hour of the discovery of the loss of Powerscourt. She took a little cognac in her coffee, and Vesey, at her invitation, did the same.

"What do you intend doing in town?" Lady Clara asked.

"I shall be busy for a day or two," he replied, with a significant look. "THAT will take some time to do, for it must be well done."

"And you think you can do it without assistance?"

"I believe so."

What was between them they gave no name to, but spoke of it throughout as "that." More of the conversation on that point need not be recorded. The subject occupied them quite half an hour, and Lady Clara had finished her cigarette and taken another when the waiter entered the room.

"A telegram, my lady," he said.

Pincey's eminent respectability was not shocked at a lady of birth smoking a cigarette, as she in all likelihood acted under medical advice, but Pincey's would have been overcome if one of the female servants had dared to think of such a thing. That servant would have been dismissed forthwith.

"Thank you," said Lady Clara, calmly. She opened it and read the few lines therein with an unmoved face. "No answer," she said.

The waiter bowed and glided out as quietly as a modest ghost would have done. Lady Clara put a little cognac into a wine glass and drank it off as it was without water.

"From Revaine," she said.

"Indeed," returned Vesey Sutherland, with his eyes down, "is he coming up?"

"Shall I read it to you?"

"If you please."

"Lady Blane has been shot this morning and now lies in a very precarious condition. It is not known yet who the wretch is, but the police have a clue."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Vesey, "what a terrible thing."

"Now, don't pretend that you are sorry for her," said Lady Clara, with a sneer, "for you cannot be so any more than I am. Why should you?"

"It seems such a cruel thing—"

"Pooh, you are getting maudlin," interposed Lady Clara, with a curl of her lip, "don't be a hypocrite."

"I am not a hypocrite," Vesey said, apologetically, "but I at least claim that I am not dead to all feeling."

"That is, you are still troubled with nerves, and get frightened at the shadow of a thing. But that is the way with you men; you are brave enough until the push comes, and then you give in. You surely would not pretend to grieve for her."

"Hardly. And yet once upon a time I admired her, as you know, and the memory of it crops up at this moment unpleasantly. However, I'll not bore you with my feelings."

Lady Clara cast a keen, contemptuous look at him and finished her coffee. Rising, she went to the window and looked into the street through the venetian blind, separating two of the

laths with her hand. Outside a little snow was falling.

"A bitter night," she said, turning back. "I should not like to be poor and homeless now."

"Nor I," replied Vesey, "but I have been near it I can tell you."

"That was when your uncle cut off your income."

"Yes, I went ahead and spent the year's income in a month. What I was to do with the other eleven was a problem I have fortunately not had to solve."

"You have money now, a fair income?" said Lady Clara, inquiringly.

"Yes, say five hundred a year."

"May I ask from whom you inherited it?"

The question brought a hot flush to his face, and his eyes fell before her scrutinising gaze. She looked at him long and steadily and finally burst into a harsh, grating laugh.

"I know," she said, "where you got your money from."

"If you know," he doggedly returned, "there is no need to ask any questions."

"That creature allows you it. She has given you an income and you have been mean enough to take it."

"What was I to do?" asked Vesey, with a frown. "She wrote to me offering it as some slight compensation for losing my birthright. It was better than nothing and I took it. It was more than many women would have done for me, more than you would have thought of if my uncle had left everything to you."

"That's true," Lady Clara returned, "I would have given you nothing."

"Between us there is no debt," Vesey went on, holding back his anger with a strong hand, "you entertained me at Strathlone and I wrote to you to let you know what I saw that morning when I accidentally stumbled against the pretty pair coming out of church. I knew by their faces what ceremony they had gone through, but I took the trouble to get confirmation when they had driven away. I wrote to you at once."

"And I wrote by return," said Lady Clara, "saying that the creature must not be lifted up."

"Blane would have done it perhaps."

"Let him lift her up now if he can," Lady Clara said, with a mocking smile, "she may be dead by this time."

"If so," said Vesey, in a low tone, "somebody will have to answer for it."

There was a pause—he sitting sullenly in his chair fighting with the demon of remorse, Lady Clara surveying him in the same cold, contemptuous manner.

"I want you to take me to a theatre to-night," she said, suddenly.

"To a theatre!" he exclaimed, looking up with a startled face.

"Yes; I find no pleasure in sitting here, and I am sure you can feel none. We shall only quarrel. Order a cab and we will go to St. James's. We may find a box or stall empty there."

"As you please," he said, and rang the bell to give the waiter instructions to get a brougham from the livery stables in the mews close by.

An hour later the pair were seated in the dress-circle, wearing the calm look upon their faces that goes so far to make the upper classes bear some resemblance to each other.

And yet what a weight there was on both their hearts. A mountain would have rested more lightly there.

The play they witnessed was "Black-Eyed Susan," and Vesey tried to follow it, and succeeded at last in being interested, but the end disappointed him.

"I have been picturing myself in that fellow's place," he said, as they went downstairs, "and I really felt indignant in sympathy with him, but somehow I did not want a reprieve. My idea was to get hanged and be put out of my misery."

"Better men than you have found that end," said Lady Clara, with a light laugh.

"And women occasionally have had to endure it," he answered.

They both became sullen and spoke not a

word to each other all the way home. On arriving there they exchanged a cold good-night and sought their respective chambers.

Neither slept much. Lady Clara sat brooding over the fire until the smaller hours of the morning were past, and Vesey, with a bottle of brandy, hot water, and cigars, made great efforts to dispel a gloom that had taken possession of him.

But it could not be shaken off, and every few minutes he would glance apprehensively round the room as if he feared to find there some spectre that "haunts the guilty mind." Nor did the drink he partook of appear to give him nerve, for when the clock struck three he stirred the fire into a blaze and lighted two candles upon the mantelpiece with a trembling hand. The lamp he thought was burning low and dull, but it was really as bright as ever.

"It's a bad business," he muttered, "and I wish—No, I'll not wish about the past, that is a fool's trick. I'll drink and drown it."

He had changed much during the past few months. Vesey Sutherland was no longer the upright, easy-going gentleman at ease, with nothing to do but to show his handsome face and figure about, but a man with the lines of care developing on his forehead, and quick, anxious eyes, such as those who seek rest and find none are accredited with possessing. He had changed and changed very much for the worse.

"I will break off my connection with HER," he muttered, as he at last, half stupefied with drink, got into bed, "she goes too far for me."

He was soon asleep and slept until a late hour. It was eleven o'clock when he rang for hot water, and the waiter who responded to his ring told him, in reference to his inquiries, that Lady Clara had already risen, breakfasted, and gone out.

"Very good," he said, "bring me a cup of coffee, a little cognac, and have a hansom cab ready in half an hour."

He dressed, drank his coffee, and the cab being ready for him he lighted a cigar and stepped in.

"To Bligh's Hospital," he said.

In a quarter of an hour or so the cab pulled up at the door of the well-known hospital, and Vesey beckoned to the hall porter.

"Is Doctor Danvers in?" he asked.

"Yes, sir, just come. This is one of his regular mornings."

"Take in my card and ask him if he can see me."

Doctor Danvers came out to greet him. He was a young man, not more than thirty, with the bright, intelligent face of the enthusiast, and he was an enthusiast in his profession.

"How are you, Sutherland?" he said. "I haven't seen you for months. You don't look well."

"I have not been quite right for some weeks," Vesey replied, as he stepped out and shook hands with the doctor.

"Been up late, balls, routs, the gay and festive dinner—"

"No, not much of that, but worried."

They entered the hospital and Doctor Danvers led the way to his own sanctum, a room full of the interesting horrors attached to a surgery.

"Now," he said, "if you can amuse yourself for an hour I'll give the rest of the morning up to two o'clock to you. We have an amputation case just coming on, and a very interesting one too."

"Don't talk of it," said Vesey, shuddering, "the very thought of your knife makes me ill. I don't know that I can wait so long. I came to ask a favour of you."

"Well, my dear fellow, what is it?"

"A favourite dog of mine is now so old that his life is a misery to him."

"And you want to put him at rest?"

"Quietly and without pain," Vesey said.

He stood with his back to the light, so that the paleness which had suddenly overspread his face was not marked by Doctor Danvers, who was also engaged in looking about the table.

"I can give you something," he said, "that will do the trick to perfection. Where are my

keys? That confounded habit of mislaying things. Oh, of course, I have them in my pocket. Strange thing I always look for them there last. I have something here that will do what you want. Only you must be careful in using it."

"I will be so."

"Trust no man with it. Two drops will take a human life, not suddenly, but surely. You might swallow it and walk about half an hour quite comfortably. At the end of that time you would be dead, falling asleep and waking no more."

"Of course I shall be careful," said Vesey, with a laugh, "life is so not dreary yet that I want to sleep eternally."

Doctor Danvers unlocked a drawer and took out a blue bottle labelled "Poison," and looked about him for an empty phial. He could not see one, although there was what he wanted under his very nose.

"I must get one from the dispensary," he said. "I shall not be gone a moment. Do not leave the room or take your eyes off that bottle."

Vesey faithfully promised to do as he was told, and as soon as the doctor had left the room he took up from among some papers scattered about the latter a small phial which had escaped the observation of his friend. Into this he quickly poured some of the poison, and for the want of something better corked it with a piece of paper and thrust it into his pocket.

"Better have known," he muttered. "When you have anything of this sort on hand it is better to make sure."

He was sitting composedly in a chair when Doctor Danvers returned with what he wanted in his hand. A few drops were poured from the larger bottle, and, carefully corked and labelled, the dangerous liquid was handed to Vesey Sutherland.

"If you should not use it be sure the bottle is thrown away with the cork out," the giver said.

"I will remember," Vesey said. "And now good bye. You are sure there is enough here?"

"Enough for two or three dogs—quite enough for a man."

They shook hands, and Vesey walked away with a light step. The possession of the dangerous little bottle gave him a sense of power, and for a reason best known to himself lifted him out of the moody way he had been in during the last day or so.

"It will never do to have two in a forgery business," he muttered, as he strolled on, "and the hand that does all the work ought to have the profit."

So it is pretty clear that he had murder in view. Having once left the path of integrity for the quagmire of crime he, as a matter of course, every moment got deeper, and now he was on the eve of being fairly swamped.

And Lady Clara had fallen as low. That very day, while Vesey Sutherland was plotting her death, she was engaged in devising means of getting rid of him when a fitting time should come. When he had answered her purpose and could be of no further use to her he was to be put out of the way as a tool when used had better be forgotten.

And thus it is, even in the world of sin and knavery. There is no real bondage in crime, and where self interest dictates the doing of another crime it is too often carried out without the slightest hesitation.

CHAPTER XXIV.

NO WORD OR SIGN.

So wasted and so wild
In his attire.

MAT ARDANT was brought to the lock-up at Comleyford and the next morning was taken before Sir Towerby Browning, one of the county magistrates, on the charge of having attempted to take the life of Lady Blane. Very little evidence was offered. Inspector Rachett spoke to

the finding of the handkerchief, which he could produce witnesses who would swear that it belonged to the prisoner. He asked for a remand, and it being granted for a week Mat Ardent was taken to the county jail.

A great change had come over the wretched critic. How he had spent the time since he parted from Rhoda could be traced in his attire—dirty, mud-stained, and torn in fifty places. His face was haggard and his eyes wild.

When charged before the magistrate he stood erect enough, but with his eyes upon the ground and his hands clasped before him. When asked what he had to say to the charge he said nothing, and after the remand had been granted he accompanied Inspector Rachett to the cab waiting without uttering a word.

The inspector had one man with him, but he was on the box. The prisoner and his chief guardian were the sole occupants of the inside. They had eleven miles to drive and the silence soon grew monotonous to the official.

"A finer day than this we have not had for some time," he said.

Mat Ardent replied, not sullenly or angrily, but merely with indifference, to the effect that it mattered very little to him whether it was fine or not.

"You must have found it roughish knocking about," the inspector continued.

"Knocking about?" Mat said. "Where?"

"Oh, anywhere in a general way, as you've been doing lately," Inspector Rachett rejoined.

"Of course, I don't want you to talk too free so as to commit yourself, for whatever you say will be used against you."

"I have nothing to say," Mat replied.

"That's a pity," replied the inspector. "I wish you had."

"You want me to make a confession?"

"No, I don't. I never wish any man to make it in a bad case. In a little one it saves a lot of bother and soon settles the business. What a lot of trouble some petty rascals do give us to be sure. No. I would like you to deny the crime in a way that would make me believe you."

"I will neither confess nor deny," said Mat Ardent. "I say nothing. You may hang me, and I won't grumble."

"Oh, it's not a hanging matter," said the inspector, encouragingly, "although shooting with intent is serious enough. And what the pretty creature had done to injure you I can't guess."

"She has done nothing," replied Mat.

"There you are," said Inspector Rachett, in an argumentative manner, "and that's as good as saying you did not do it, for you are not a man with any miserable malice in you; and if you were discharged why—"

"I was not discharged. I left of my own free will."

"See—there now. And what could make you do that?"

"It is no use cross-examining me," Mat said. "I have nothing to say. Charge me with what you will I have no defence."

"Very well, very well," murmured the inspector. "You know best. Why, if I were in your place, having a regard for the lady—"

"Who told you I had?" Mat demanded.

"She didn't, I'll swear."

"Oh, no. Nobody told me. I hit that off as a bit of guesswork. Now, having a regard for her and not liking to hear of her being injured, you would naturally be anxious to give information, if you have any to give, about who did it. Now, your handkerchief being found on the spot points to your having been about the house lately."

"Yes, I have been about the house many times, particularly at night," Mat replied. "I was there last night. You may use that against me if you like."

"No, I won't. It means nothing to me. But if you were there this morning, say about eight o'clock, and you saw a woman hanging about—"

"Good Heavens, man! Were you there, that you talk in that way?" said Mat, drawn out of his reserve.

"Ah! It was so," said the inspector, soothingly. "Number two guess, and a good one. Now, that woman was tall?"

"Yes, she was."

"And was wrapped up in a thick cloak and she wore a fur hat?"

"She did."

"Ah! Then you see there's no denying that you were there, and that will go very much against you."

"You will use what I have been saying to you?"

"Very likely," replied the inspector, complacently.

"What a mean, contemptible cur you must be," said Mat. "Not that it matters to me. Pile up a mountain of evidence and get me out of the way."

"Don't you fall into the bad habit of jumping at conclusions," said Inspector Rachett, calmly.

"Better wait until you see the end before you quits make up your mind about me."

He spoke to Mat several times afterward, but got no answer, and when the county jail was reached he handed his prisoner over to the authorities there, bidding them take care of him, for he was "a valuable bit of property."

"And see that he don't lay hands on himself," was his final injunction, "for he's in a bad way, and I may want him again."

Returning to his office at Comleyford he wrote a letter to Sir Beresford and despatched it by one of his men. The baronet and policeman came back together.

"Lady Blane," Sir Beresford said, "is so much better that I could safely leave her for an hour or two, and your letter being so extraordinarily mystical I thought I had better ride over to have it explained."

"It never does to put too much upon paper," Sir Beresford, Inspector Rachett replied. "Many a good scent has been spoiled by a letter being left carelessly about. Somebody who ought not to have seen it has got hold of it. The fox has been warned and crossed water, which spoils almost any scent you know."

"You say here," said Sir Beresford, referring to the communication sent to him, "that Ardent denies nothing. That is equivalent to a confession."

"With some, but not with all," the inspector answered. "He is in a reckless way, and would just as soon be hanged for this job as any other. But he is not guilty."

"You think not?"

"I'd stake my name on it, Sir Beresford. One of my men saw a lady crossing the park and making for the road that leads to Haggatt Station, which is next to Strathlone and your house. He did not think much of it at the time, and made no special mention of it in his report, but he remembered afterwards that she hid her face from him with a handkerchief, and he thought she might have something to do with it."

"A lady?" said Sir Beresford, thoughtfully.

"Yes, a lady," softly murmured the inspector. "And it would be as well to find out who she is, and for the sake of her good name let her clear herself of any suspicion. Now can you tell me any lady likely to do it?"

"I should not like to name one," Sir Beresford returned, with a shake of his head.

"But is there one who is not friendly to your lady?"

"Well, yes. I know of one."

"Then there is no harm in naming her."

"It appears to me ridiculous to do so."

"Never mind, Sir Beresford," said the inspector. "Name her."

"Lady Clara, or Lady Sutherland, as most people call her."

"Ah, then of course it is ridiculous," said the inspector, lightly, "for I happen to know she went to London the day before. So we will talk no more of her."

"I am glad to hear you say so," said Sir Beresford, in a measure relieved, "for I have partaken of the hospitality of Strathlone, and I should not like to give the earl or his family the least trouble or annoyance."

"People as a rule have very little trouble that they don't bring upon themselves," sagaciously remarked the inspector. "Well, sir, is there no other woman likely to have a feeling of spite against your lady?"

"None that I know of, here or elsewhere."

"You have talked to Lady Blane about it?"

"Yes, and she can think of no one who would injure her wilfully."

"Not even the man in custody?"

"Lady Blane is perfectly certain of his innocence."

"Well, it's not a clear case, but I will endeavour to make it so before I have done with it," the inspector remarked. "There is nothing more I have to trouble you with, Sir Beresford, and I'm more than obliged to you for coming over. It has spared a lot of trouble and delay."

Sir Beresford left, and the moment he was gone the inspector struck a small hand ball upon his desk. In response a quiet, grave-looking man, with something clerical in the cut of his clothes, glided into the office from an inner room.

"Dobbs," said the inspector, "I have a job for you, one after your own heart."

"I am glad to hear it, sir," replied Dobbs.

"I'm rather dull and want cheering up."

"Do you know Lady Clara and Vesey Sutherland?"

"Both, sir."

"They left for London the day before Lady Blane was attacked. You must find out when they arrived and where they halted, if at all, by the way. All you gather you must write to me as you obtain it."

"In the usual cypher, sir?"

"What else would you send it in, you dunder-head?"

"Very good, sir."

Mr. Dobbs bore the reproof conveyed with meekness and patience. He understood his chief as well as his chief knew him, and perhaps a little better. A great deal that Dobbs knew he kept to himself. Ravenlike he had certain morsels hidden away over which he gloated alone and never intended any other man to see if he could help it.

His happy hunting ground was the track of crime, and his one idea of unadulterated felicity the pleasure of tracing out an outrage upon the laws of society and bringing the evil deer to book.

Not that Dobbs was very much more moral than the rest of the world. He had his weaknesses and he had his price, but he indulged his weaknesses only when there was nothing doing and his price was too heavy for ordinary criminals to pay.

Inspector Rachett knew this much, and as Dobbs was putting on his overcoat he said to him, with a marked emphasis to every word:

"I—expect—you—to—give—me—the—straight—tip—in—this—matter."

"I'll do it, sir," replied Dobbs.

"No talking to the party."

"Not a word, sir," said Dobbs, contemptuously;

"both on 'em with nothing to spare."

The weaknesses of Mr. Dobbs were cold gin and tobacco, and it was very hard for him to resist them on such a night, but resist them he did, and with a clear, cool head he went to work.

At Comleyford Railway Station he took a parliamentary ticket for a place some half-dozen stations down the line, and as the train stopped at each place he got out and made a few inquiries of the station-master and the porters.

Nothing gratified him in the way of news until he reached Appleby. Here a porter recollected Lady Clara and Vesey by the description given of them.

"They got out here," he said, "and stopped for the night."

"That will do," replied Dobbs. "I'll talk to you when the train is gone. The ticket is for Durham, but I'm not going on."

"Just like them two you are asking about," the porter said; "their tickets were for London and they didn't go on."



[CONSPIRATORS.]

Mr. Dobbs was elated, but he did not show it. He would also have liked to crown his joy with a smoke, but he fought down the temptation, and when the train was gone he and the porter resumed their conference.

"I suppose it's a sort of run-away affair?" the porter said.

"Now how could you be clever enough to think of that?" asked Dobbs, apparently overcome with admiration.

"Well, it struck me, as it might strike most people, you know," the porter replied.

"But it would not strike most people, for most people are fools," Dobbs warmly insisted, "but you saw it at a glance."

"And she's the wife of another man?"

"There, don't say any more, for I daresay you've guessed their names."

"Can't say I have, sir."

"Well, I may tell you their names by-and-bye. They stopped at one of the hotels?"

"At the Angel, sir."

"Thank you," said Dobbs, suavely. "I'll just run up there, and if you should be coming that way step in and ask for me. A drink together won't hurt us."

Dobbs did not go straight to the Angel, but to the post-office, whence he telegraphed in cypher to his chief:

"Stopped at Appleby for the night. I shall be at the Angel during the next two hours at least, or all night."

Having so far done his duty he went to the hotel and entered the coffee-room, where he found himself quite alone with a waiter, with whom he got into affable conversation.

"A slack time of year," he said.

The waiter admitted a very slack time, not even the commercials about, and time being very heavy on his hands.

"Not so many people here during the past week or two but what you would remember every face?"

"I could remember everyone for three weeks or more if I tried," the waiter said.

"Ah! then you," said Dobbs—"you can call to mind my master and mistress if I describe them to you?"

And Dobbs did describe them with many lamentations on having left so good and kind a mistress, and her brother, who was even kinder in some respects, and the waiter did remember them as Mrs. Garrard and Mr. Vesey.

"She's been married, you know," Dobbs said, "and that's how she came to change her name."

"She was a very eccentric party, it struck me," the waiter said.

"So she was," Dobbs assented, "and you never knew what she was going to do, but she meant no harm."

"As soon as she came here," the waiter said, "she was off again—alone—and was out all night. We saw nothing more of her until next day—let me see, close on noon. Then they paid their bill and took the up train."

"Just like her," said Dobbs, enthusiastically; "but there, you never knew what she was going to do."

"Now, where could she have been all night?" asked the waiter, with a musing eye.

"She was very fond of botany," said Dobbs, looking steadily at him, "and takes particular to herbs. Some must be gathered with the evening dew and t'others with the morning dew on them. That's how it is."

The waiter did not quite see it, but Dobbs did not pursue the subject. He had learnt all that was needed for the present, and it being too late now to telegraph he resolved to enjoy himself.

Ordering a glass of his favourite drink he filled his pipe and sat in a corner in a very meditative frame of mind, ignoring such customers as came in and maintaining a reserve worthy of a diplomatist. He had sundry glasses and sundry pipes, and finally retired a little uncertain in his footsteps, but conscious of the duty before him.

"I must be called at six," he said, "so that I catch the first up train to Haggatt. It goes at seven-fifteen, I think."

The hour he named was recorded on a slate, and at six o'clock the boots hammered at his door. He arose, and filling the basin with cold water plunged his head and face into it. This cleared away the cobwebs arising from the overnight's indulgence, and Dobbs was himself again. He caught his train, and was in Comleyford as soon as a telegram would have been.

The inspector received him graciously, knowing that he had news, and when he heard Dobbs's story he expressed himself satisfied.

"The next thing," he said, "is for you to find the mould that cast that bullet. Most likely it is at Strathlone."

"And how am I to get into Strathlone, sir?" Dobbs inquired.

"The best way you can," was the reply; "only get in you must."

"I suppose it is in the armoury, or some place of that sort."

"In Lord Revaine's room, I should say, or perhaps in Lady Clara's boudoir. Go and find it."

Dobbs felt it was useless to argue. When orders were given him it was his duty to carry them out. He was away all day and returned late at night.

"Well?" the inspector said.

"I've found the mould," he said. "I got into the place by talking to the butler, who it seems is in some way connected with me by marriage. The earl and Lord Revaine were out, and Lady Clara being away he offered to show me the place. I saw the mould in Lady Clara's room, upon the mantelpiece."

"And of course you left it there?"

"Of course. It was not for me to take it."

"Right," said Inspector Rachett, with an air of satisfaction; "that can be fetched when wanted. If nothing happens now I have my lady in my toils."

(To be Continued.)



[A CONFIDENCE.]

THE SPANISH BRIDE.

A NOVELETTE.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

A FIERCE storm had been driving down the Pyrenees all day long, lashing the chestnut and flex branches against each other like whips, scooping a new channel for the headlong mountain torrent that watered the valley of Praya del Norte, and beating against the grey old walls of the monastery.

The monks had just finished vespers, and Father Peter, the porter, went, according to custom, to lock the convent gate for the night.

"Holy Mother," he cried, suddenly, "what is this?"

A closely covered carriage, drawn by four mules, dashed down the narrow road, and stopped in front of the gate, and a voice called from the rumble, in the rear:

"How far to the next town, father?"

"Three leagues to Villanova, my son. And be very careful at the ford, for the river is swollen already, and by morning may not be passed."

"Milé diablos! Pardon, father. But we shall never reach Villanova, I fear. Might we stay here?"

"Who asks for hospitality?" inquired the monk, cautiously.

"My master, Senor Don Alphonsode Guzman; his son, Don Ignacio; and his daughter, Dona Carmita, with Bettina, her nurse."

"Your master and the mules, the postillions and yourself, are welcome. The women cannot be received."

"Caramba! You would leave a delicate lady and an old woman exposed to this tempest all night?"

"I did not compose the rules of this house, nor can I alter them," replied the monk.

"Thunder and lightning! I will call my master," interrupted the servant, angrily.

"Do so, my son, and I, meantime, will go and bring the prior."

When the servant-man presently returned, conducting a tall and stately cavalier, whose black brows and quivering moustache suited well the angry light of his eyes, they were met by the porter, and led into a little lodge beside the gate, where stood Father Baptisto, the prior.

He received his guest courteously, expressed regret that he should have been annoyed in any manner, but repeated, in smoother phrases, what Peter had already told.

"But," continued the prior, "the house of Miguel Lopez, one of our tenants, is but a quarter of a league, or less, from our gates, and with a message from me he will gladly offer the senorita the best he has."

"Bueno! That will do admirably, reverend father, and we will find our way thither at once, leave the senorita and her nurse, and return here before the hour is out. Lead on, Cherubino."

The noble, bowing haughtily, strode out of the room, followed by his valet. The prior looked after them, a slight flush staining his dark cheek at the half-concealed insolence of the man; then he quietly said to the porter:

"Ring the bell for compline, my son, and if our guests return before the office is ended, show them to the guest chambers. Also warn brother Tomaco to prepare something more for supper. Happily it is not a fast day."

"It would do that gay serving-man no harm to fast, if it were," muttered Peter, turning away.

But before either he or the prior had traversed the long passage leading from the lodge to the house, a strong, sudden peal at the bell startled both, and the porter, turning back, exclaimed:

"What, are they here already?"

But as he unlocked and threw wide the gate, a solitary figure appeared upon the threshold. It was that of a young man, holding a horse by

the bridle. Both horse and man were streaming with rain, and worn by storm and travel.

"Good even, father. Can you give a benighted traveller a night's lodging, for the love of God?" demanded the stranger, courteously, and the monk, opening the gate, the stranger led his horse into the court-yard, and tying him to a ring in the most sheltered nook, stepped inside the lodge door, displaying to the prior the tall, finely-made form and proudly-handsome features of a cavalier, not quite thirty years old, richly dressed.

"You shall have what we can offer, my son," said the monk, "but our two principal guest-rooms are already taken up, and a bare cell is all that is left."

"A soldier cares almost as little for luxuries as a monk, good father," replied the cavalier. "But may I inquire who are your guests? I might find some friends."

Careless as the tone he assumed, there was a ring of anxiety about it, which the monk was not slow to perceive.

"You will meet them in the refectory presently, my son, and learn their names from themselves. What shall I call you?" he said.

"Don Carlos, if it please you, father."

"Well, then, we will meet at supper, unless you prefer coming with us to chapel, while we say compline."

"Thanks, father, I will go to chapel," replied Don Carlos, after a moment's hesitation; and, well pleased, the prior led the way through a long passage and a winding cloister to the half-lighted church, where the monks, already assembled in the choir, awaited their superior.

Don Carlos followed his guide about half-way up the church, when, turning a little aside, he knelt in the deep shadow of a pillar, and drew his cloak around the lower part of his face, bowing his head as if in deep abstraction. At the same moment the Senors de Guzman, escorted by a lay brother, entered the church by another door, and went forward to a row of chairs directly in front of the altar.

When they had fairly passed, Don Carlos

cautiously raised his head, and still muffling the lower part of his face with his cloak, watched, until father and son, lifting their faces toward the lighted altar, revealed the high and haughty features of the De Gusman race. Once having fairly seen them, Don Carlos looked no more, but withdrawing a little deeper into the shadow, remained devoutly kneeling until the office was ended, when he as quietly withdrew.

The other guests were shown at once to the refectory, and the prior was about to follow them when, at a dark corner of the passage, he encountered Don Carlos, who said, meekly:

"Sir prior, a word with you, if you will."

"Before supper, my son?"

"Yes, father, now."

"Come in here, then."

And the prior pushed open the door of a bare cell close to the refectory, and stepped in.

"I ought to tell you," said Don Carlos, "before I eat, that I am Don Carlos d'Acunha of Cordova, and that my family and that of De Gusman have been for the last fifty years at deadly feud. Now I am only desirous to peacefully pursue my journey, but Ignacio de Gusman is of so quarrelsome a nature that, if he should set eyes upon me, there would be daggers drawn, and blood shed, to the scandal of this holy house and abuse of your hospitality. For this reason, father, I pray you to allow me to remain out of sight of my enemies, and not to mention my neighbourhood to them. Should they speak of another guest in the house you might say that he gave his name as Carlos Avilla, which is indeed one of the names I have a right to bear. Will you keep my secret, father, and suffer me to sup in my own room?"

"You do well, my son," replied the prior, "to avoid needless strife. I will keep your secret, and you shall be served with food and wine in your own cell."

With these words they parted.

The storm, meantime, continued so violent that Don Gusman, before retiring, remarked that, with the prior's permission, he would remain for another day. No preparations, in consequence, were ordered for departure. It was, therefore, with something of a start that Father Peter, as he sleepily and yawningly undid the wicket of the outer gate, after ringing the great bell to wake up the brothers, found his nose almost in contact with the top of a woman's head upon the other side of the wicket.

"Why, father," cried a girl's voice, "surely you must know me—Dolores Lopez. I have come to speak to the reverend prior about some eggs and chickens he sent for last night; and I come early to get a word with him before he goes into church for prime."

"And why did not your father come, or, at least, your mother?" demanded the monk, severely. "You know very well that the reverend father never wishes girls like you to come to the convent, except for confession. Who is there beyond you? Isabella?" The prior is angry enough with her, I can tell you, after her going to the fair at Villanova with Roberto Lopez. She'd better not come near him very soon, unless she wants a severe penance."

"Listen, father," replied Dolores, in a low voice, and coming close to the wicket. "But first be gracious, and take this honey-comb from me. It is not against rules to eat a little honey on a feast day, and this is Saint Agatha's, you know. It came from your hive."

"Ah, ah! you wish to coax us, little wretch," laughed the porter, who had known this daughter of the convent's farm since she was a baby brought thither for baptism. "You know well enough that I shall break no rules for you, or go one step out of my duty; but inside that limit I like to please you; you are a good girl; and as for the honey-comb, I do not say but it is a toothsome morsel on a feast day, and I thank you. Well?"

"Well, then, father, poor Isabella is so sorry for her fault, oh, you can't think how sorry, and she does so want to get her reverend godfather's pardon. Here she is, so sick and tired with crying and penitence that she could hardly come up the hill, and if my mother knew it, she would half kill her for leaving the house, for she has

been made a real prisoner since the fair; and now, dear, good Father Peter, do just let us into the locutory, and ask the father to come and speak with us before prime, so that Isabella may get home and be safe in my bedroom when my mother rises. Do now, dear father."

"Well, well, wait till I see," and Father Peter hurried away to the prior's cell.

"Courage, senorita," murmured Dolores, turning from the gate and addressing the tall, slight, girl-figure, standing so close against the wall as not easily to be reconnoitred from the wicket. "The prior will be sure to come. He can't miss the chance of scolding my sister, Isabella; she is his god-child, and has been very naughty."

"What has she done, Dolores?" asked a sweet but rather tremulous voice.

"Why, they want her to marry old Gaspardo Deluso, a rich corn-merchant of Villanova, and the padre told her she must, and she consented; but then came our handsome cousin, Roberto, and, well, I helped her, and Isabella got out of the window and ran away with him to the great fair at Villanova, and was there all day. Gaspardo saw her, and came raving to my father, and they went and brought her home, and my father gave her a great beating with the donkey-stick, and Gaspardo said he wouldn't marry her now, and it is all dreadful. I suppose they will make it up and marry her to him, finally, but she says she had rather die."

"And so would I," fervently murmured the senorita, as she followed her companion through the little door of the convent-wall into a small, bare room with a grated window.

Through this grating alone might the pernicious influence of woman penetrate into the Benedictine convent, and this room, devoted to conversational purposes, was called the locutory.

Hardly had the two girls entered and closed the door when the prior appeared at the opposite side of the grating, and with a hasty murmured blessing demanded:

"Isabella, is it true that you have come to make your submission, and ask my intercession with your parents?"

"It is not Isabella, reverend father," replied a sweet voice, as the mantilla fell down upon the shoulders of the graceful figure and displayed a face of such astonishing beauty that, after one glance, the monk dropped his eyes, yet found them again ensnared by the little, tapering, jewelled fingers, that were nervously clasped upon the window ledge.

"Do not be angry, father, at the deception," pursued the stranger, hurriedly. "It seemed the only way to get speech of you, secretly and instantly, and I am in such sore distress. And do not blame Dolores, father—"

"Who are you, my daughter, and what is your need?" interposed the prior.

"I am Carmita de Gusman, father, whom you sent last night to the house of your farmer, Lopez," replied the young lady, with more self-possession than she had yet shown. "And this good girl, who was deputed to wait upon me, finding me in great grief and terror, spoke to me of your wisdom and kindness, and advised my coming in this manner to speak with you."

"Tell us your need, daughter, and if you can speak more freely alone with me, Dolores may wait outside."

As soon as Dolores had left the other fell upon her knees and sobbed out:

"Oh, father, they will marry me to-morrow to a bad, horrible old man, a man I loathe and hate, and who will make me bad too."

"Who is it?" interrupted the monk. "Who marries you to this man?"

"My father and brother. He is very rich, and my father is troubled about money, and Don Federico will give up an estate my father and him are at law about, and he will pay my brother's debts, and dower my younger sister."

"Good things for your family, my daughter, if you will help to obtain them."

"Yes, but at what price, father? Body and soul, this world and heaven, all happiness here and hereafter."

"There is something behind all this, my child. Do you love somebody else?"

A faint colour flushed into Carmita's pallid cheeks, but she answered, promptly and bravely: "Yes, my father, I love, and have promised to marry, one who is good, brave, handsome and noble, the absolute contrast to Don Federico de Castellobranco."

"And what is the name of him you love, and what is the objection of your family?"

"He is named Rafaelo de Orvieto y Diaz, and his family and mine have been at feud for a century or more," replied the girl, sadly. "Besides, he is not rich, as my father counts riches, although rich enough to satisfy me."

The monk visibly started, and asked, suddenly:

"Does he come from Cordova?"

"No, father, from the neighbourhood of Granada."

"How does he look?"

"He is quite tall, with a powerful figure. His eyes are hazel and very piercing and commanding. His hair is dark and close cut, and he wears a sweeping montachio. He has a very pleasant smile, although his face in repose is a little too haughty. Have you seen him, father?"

"Has he other names than those you mention?"

"Yes, father, he has a right to bear his mother's name of D'Acunha, and I think he is called Diego and Carlos, besides Rafaelo. One has so many names when one is of a good house and of pious parents."

"Yes," replied the prior, drily. "Well, my daughter, I can give you no better counsel than to go home and quietly submit yourself to your father, to whom you owe duty and obedience. God promises reward to those who honour their parents—"

"Thanks, father," interrupted Carmita, rising hastily from her knees and drawing the mantilla about her head. "The homily is admirable, but I have heard it so many times in my life already that I need not detain you to deliver it again. As a last favour, I will beg you to say a requiem mass on the morning after we resume our journey for the souls of Federico de Castellobranco, murdered on his wedding night, and Carmita, the wretched bride, who murdered him, and who, in justice to her, was driven to the deed by the tyranny of her family and the cold indifference of the priest to whom she came for aid."

She was gone with the last word, and as the bell tolled its call to prime the monk turned and went thoughtfully to chapel, his downcast face and frowning brows speaking deep perplexity.

The office ended, the prior took his way down the guests' corridor, and knocking slightly upon one of the last doors, was bidden to enter. The stalwart young knight was just finishing his toilet, and looking handsomer than ever.

"Good morrow, father," he said, blithely, turning to welcome the monk. "Have I your blessing and good wishes?"

"Neither, until I know if you deserve them," replied the prior, severely. "Why did you deceive me last night with a false name?"

"Oh, the De Gusmans have found me out, have they?" retorted the young man, loosening his rapier in its sheath. "Very well, if Ignacio is ready, so am I. There are reasons why I had rather not have shed De Gusman blood, but if so it must be, Rafaelo de Orvieto y Diaz will not be the first man of his house to turn his back on a De Gusman."

"You shrink from shedding their blood, but you are following like a sleuth-hound upon their trail. Is it in hopes of spoiling the honour that is worth more than life to such as you and them?"

The prior spoke with cold severity, and fixed his eyes keenly on the young man.

Rafaelo glanced up in some astonishment, then crossing his arms, and confronting the monk, he said, as coldly:

"Speak out, reverend father, if you have anything to say. I am a good son of Mother Church, and gladly pay all deference and duty to her

priests, but I am not a child, to be chidden and make no reply. What do you wish of me beyond an apology hereby tendered for using some reserve last night in giving but one of my baptismal names? I assumed the title of my mother's family rather than my father's. It was a precaution which, considering I was housed with two men sworn to have my blood at the first opportunity, seems to me not ill-advised."

"You might have really trusted me as well as pretended to do so," replied Father Juan, more mildly. "And the reason I sought you now," he added, "was to ask if you are disposed to trust me altogether. I should be glad to hear from your own lips, if you choose to give it, the true story of your attachment to the *senorita*, Dona Carmita de Guzman, and to learn what is your object in following her and her family."

"One question on my part, father," replied the young man, after a moment of hesitation. "Do you approach me as envoy of the *Senors* de Guzman?"

"No, my son, I do not. I have no reason to suppose that they know of your presence here."

"You have not? Then it must be Carmita herself. Have you seen her? Is she here?"

"Surely not, *senor*. You should know that no woman, of whatever degree, penetrates farther than the leatuary of a Benedictine monastery. Come, my son, confide in me without more questioning, and I will promise you, if not help, at least utter secrecy as to your communication."

Thus urged and glad after all, as most lovers are, to confide in a sympathetic ear, Don Rafaelo proceeded very honestly to tell how he had first seen Carmita at a school festival in the convent where his sister was educated, and how they had danced and talked together for a long evening before discovering that they were hereditary foes, and how having discovered it they agreed that the feud should end before reaching them, and how Carlotta, his sister, who had never spoken to any De Guzman, was through love of him brought over to be their friend and Carmita's confidante; and how for the year after the school feast they had corresponded, and by Carlotta's help continued to meet on sundry occasions, until finally they had pledged their troth to each other.

"Holy Mother!" interrupted the prior at this point. "How little originality the father of mischief displays in conducting these follies; the story of Isabella, the farmer's daughter at our gate, Roberto, her cousin, Dolores, the go-between sister, and Gaspardo, the old, hated bridegroom, would do admirably for the history you are telling me, *senor*, if we but change the names to Dona Carmita, *Senor* Rafaelo Carlos, Dona Carlotta, and *Senor* Don Federico de Castellobranco."

"You have his name and I have not told it!" exclaimed Don Rafaelo, more struck with this fact than with the prior's moralising. "You must have seen Carmita."

"Go on, my son," replied the prior. "What are you going to do now?"

"Castellobranco, with his castles and land and thousands of doubloons in ready gold, has bought Carmita of her proud and poor family, and they are taking her to Villanova, where he has agreed to meet them, and they will be married there within twenty-four hours of leaving this house if nobody prevents," replied the lover. "God help us!"

"Profane not God's name, my son. But why do such wealthy grandees choose this poor little nook of Spain for their marriage festivities?"

"Because they could not venture to sacrifice Carmita in presence of her hosts of relatives and friends at home. She declared to her father's face that if they took her into church to marry Castellobranco she would refuse him before the altar and call upon the priest and people to defend her. At any rate, it would have been a scandal, and the De Guzmans dared not risk it. They knew Carmita and her proud courage too well."

"She has a temper," murmured the prior, recalling the young lady's parting address.

But the lover did not listen.

"Castellobranco has estates here in the north," he continued, "and it was arranged that he should come to one of them, make preparations to receive his bride and her family, and then meet them and have the wedding at Villanova, in some little church where the priest is simply devoted to the family of Castellobranco. Once married the poor girl is in his hands."

"Or he in hers," muttered the prior, with a shrug. But aloud he said, "Well, and you?"

He glanced significantly as he spoke at Don Rafaelo's stalwart form, daring front, and the well-worn handle of the rapier at his side.

"I," repeated the young man, answering the glance with a proud and confident smile. "I have come hither to win my bride, peaceably if I may; if not, then after the fashion of the men of Benjamin when they needed wives and were refused. My confessor told me that story, and though he advised it not, I guessed that he would not be too much scandalised if I followed the example."

"But you are alone and they are three."

"I have a servant in the neighbourhood, a stout fellow, who will dispose of that wretched Cherubino and the muleteers should they dare show fight, and I would not have the old man touched if I had an army at my back, but as for Ignacio, I owe him a lesson. I will not kill him, however, lest Carmita desert me for a convent."

"Does she speak of offering herself to God?" asked the monk, in a tone of relief. "That would indeed free her from the marriage she dreads, and at the same time ensure her own everlasting happiness."

"I am not so sure of that, father, for she only wishes to become the bride of heaven if she cannot be mine."

The prior, for reply, turned towards the door and said:

"The bell is ringing for mass; come if you will and be present, afterward I will send you some breakfast. Then I will see you again and give you such advice as I can after thinking the matter over. Promise that you will do nothing, see nobody, nor leave the convent until I have spoken with you again."

"I promise, father," said Don Rafaelo, after a moment's hesitation. "Will the De Guzmans be at the mass?"

"Surely. The father made his shrift last night and will receive the sacrament," replied the prior, gravely.

"I do not mind his presence; for he does not know me by sight," explained Rafaelo. "But Ignacio and I have met two or three times, and I must keep out of his way."

"Her father does not know you by sight?"

"No, father; he has never seen me at all," replied the cavalier, carelessly, as he followed the prior out of the cell.

Breakfast over Don Alphonso, after looking at the leaden sky and pouring rain for some moments, announced his intention of remaining all day at the convent, and also of visiting his daughter if the prior would send a guide to show him the way to the farm-house. The prior graciously assented, and including Don Ignacio in his address, remarked:

"I might go myself to the farmhouse, for there is a matter weighing somewhat upon my mind with regard to my god-daughter and penitent, Carmita, there."

"Carmita!" echoed father and son, in surprise.

"Yes, the daughter of Miguel Lopez, our farmer. Ah, yes, the *Senorita* de Guzman is called Carmita also, I believe?"

"Yes, father," replied the nobles, rather haughtily.

"My god-daughter is more commonly called Isabella," said the prior, serenely. "But Carmita is not an uncommon name with us Andalusians, you know. Concerning this child I will ask your opinion, *senors*, for it is after all a matter more of the world than of the cloister, and I was at my wits' end to know what I should advise and enforce. Let us sit down and I will tell you the story and listen to your opinion."

Nothing loth, for the day threatened to be a long and tedious one and books were not the resource then that they are now, nor the De Guzmans a scholarly race, father and son seated themselves and listened while the prior, with all the eloquence of which he was master, set forth the youth, grace, and beauty of his god-daughter, Isabella Carmita, and the fervent passion that had grown up between herself and cousin, Roberto, whom the good prior also painted in most glowing colours, as a paragon of a brave, industrious, manly young fellow, his only demerit being his poverty.

"Sangrede Dios!" here interposed the father, his grim face relaxing in a humorous smile. "With two such paragons at hand, reverend prior, what doubt can there be that they should be married forthwith and the world enriched by a race of Phoenixes?"

"And as for poverty we can easily get this Roberto service with the Marquis of Castellobranco, whom we are going to visit," suggested Ignacio.

"The trouble is here," replied the prior, shaking his head. "The girl's family have arranged a marriage for her, with a rich old fellow of Villanova; he is a widower with children older than poor Isabella; he is ugly, sick, cross, and wicked to a degree; he will make the poor child's life a misery to her, and either kill her outright with cruelty, jealousy, and heart-sickness, or turn her out one of those artful, intriguing women of whom the world is full. Shall I give up my god-child to such a fate as that, *senor*? You, who have a daughter, can answer me."

The cavaliers looked at each other and then keenly into the face of Prior Juan, who met their eyes with serene unconsciousness. The elder De Guzman was the first to speak.

"Since you ask my counsel, father, I must say that, in my opinion, family discipline should be upheld. No doubt your farmer has good reason for wishing to marry his daughter to the elder suitor—"

"Oh, his reasons are the worst part of the whole affair," interrupted the prior, indignantly. "He actually is selling his own child, body and soul, for money. Old Deluzo is rich, and he will build a mill here upon the river and make it over to Lopez with money to carry it on for a year. It is a regular bargain as if it was a heifer that they bought and sold and not a human soul, a soul for which Christ died, and of whose fate He will demand account at the last day."

De Guzman turned pale and thoughtfully twisted the ring upon his finger. Ignacio hastily spoke:

"Why don't you stop this bargaining then, father? The man is your tenant; tell him he shall not have his mill, or build one yourself and lease it to him. The wishes of these peasants are of no account, and it is of course fitter to marry the girl to the young man if no weighty interests intervene. The daughter of a noble house must sacrifice her personal inclinations to the good of her family, but a peasant's daughter should marry a man of her own age and fancy, that the children may be stalwart tillers of the field. My advice is that pretty Isabella should marry the man of her heart, and her father be taught not to ape his betters in arranging marriages of convenience."

"And if you really think, reverend father," began the elder De Guzman, hesitatingly, "that it would imperil the girl's soul and bring down God's vengeance on the parents—"

His voice shook with agitation. Don Ignacio shot a keen and warning glance into his face, and said, hastily:

"Of course, this is a case by itself and no precedent for others. In general, a girl should be guided by her family, especially if her wishes turn toward a man she is bound from her birth to hate and avoid. As I said before, the rule for a peasant's daughter is no rule for a *Senorita* de Guzman. Do not you say so, father?"

"Yes, I suppose so, my son," replied the elder De Guzman, dejectedly. "But it is an awful thing to destroy the soul of your own child."

"An awful thing," repeated the prior, solemnly. "And although, as a general thing, I would be the last to encourage filial disobedience, I really feel that in this case I am saving the father from a great sin and doing God's will in preventing this unseemly marriage. Do you agree with me, seniors?"

"Entirely, reverend father," replied both cavaliers, and Don Ignacio added:

"And why not have the nuptials celebrated this very day in our presence? I will give away the bride myself—or, no, I will be Roberto's best man, and my father may represent Lopez, who will not probably be present."

"It will be very condescending and gracious of you, seniors," replied the monk, quietly, "and I will see if it can be arranged. I will go down to the farm-house with you directly and have a word with Isabella, who is a prisoner since her escape."

"What is that?" asked Ignacio, keenly, and the prior briefly recounted the flight out of the window, and the visit to the fair, the reception, and the imprisonment of the fair Isabella.

"This settles my opinion," said Don Alphonso. "After such an imprudence as that no man except the favoured one ought to marry the girl; and if the old miller is still anxious to do so he must be a very vile fellow, and should properly be disappointed."

Leaving his guests for a few moments Prior Juan now hastened to the cell where Rafaelo was pacing angrily up and down, chafing at his imprisonment and making a dozen plans in a minute for carrying on his enterprise.

The monk gazed at him with an indulgent smile, remembering perhaps some passages of his own not-long-past youth in the days before the tonsure had set its seal upon his head.

"Listen, my son," said he, kindly. "I have it in my mind to do a doubtful and venturesome thing in the hope that it is for the real benefit and salvation of two of my Master's children who have appealed to me for help. Can you promise on your part that the future shall show me to have done well? Would you be a good, faithful, Christian husband to Carmita de Guzman, if I made her your wife?"

"I promise," was the reply, "on my knightly honour, if I may wed the Senorita de Guzman to be my life long a faithful, kind, and Christian husband to her, so help me God!"

"I believe you, my son," said the prior, heartily. "Now then, listen attentively to me."

Half an hour later the prior, accompanied by Don Alphonso de Guzman, a lay brother, and Cherubino, took his way through ruin and wind and the deep clay-mud of that region to the house of Lopez.

Then, while Senor de Guzman visited his daughter, whom he found in a more mutinous condition even than when they parted the night before, the prior first talked apart with the farmer, a bull-headed, violent fellow, but still very amenable to churchly discipline, especially to the authority of the prior of San Paolo, of which house he and his ancestors had held their farm for a century or more.

The interview was a sharp if not a long one, and when it ended Prior Juan wiped his heated face with a smile of triumph. Miguel Lopez looked more conquered than convinced and repeated, anxiously:

"And you will build a mill and make me miller for life, and Roberto after me?"

"I have promised it, my son."

"You will build it at once, I think you said?"

"As soon as the spring opens."

"And you will forgive me the fifty pesos still due of rent?"

"We forgive you all your worldly debts to the convent of San Paolo, my son, and when next you come to confession all your ghostly debts as well, including the promise-breaking to Gasparido Deluzo."

"Yes, yes, and you will never let him suppose that I knew and consented to the marriage, reverend father? He must think that the girl cheated me and ran away."

"Miguel Lopez, what I have promised I have

promised; and it is far wiser for you to trust me altogether than to seek to bind me."

The voice of authority was not to be withstood, and Miguel, clumsily muttering apologies, withdrew, and presently returned bringing with him the culprit Isabella, who, at sight of her god-father, fell upon both knees and covered her face, expecting some rebuke equal to the unusual event of his visiting her father's house.

The father withdrew, and then the priest, first addressing a homily upon the duty of filial obedience and maidenly decorum to poor Isabella, suddenly changed his tone and words; and the girl, lifting her handsome brown face and great dark eyes in utter astonishment at what she heard, finally clasped her hands in an ecstasy of joy, and exclaimed:

"You will consent, father! You will marry me to Roberto! My own father is willing! Oh, Madre de Dios, what has brought about this blessed change?"

"Listen!" replied the prior, repressing her ardour with a motion of his hand. "This indulgence upon my part demands obedience on yours; and I have something for you to do which I will now explain."

If Isabella had already raised her eyes in wonder she presently opened them to their full size, and this was not trifling; she even added a generous aperture of mouth, displaying two rows of beautiful teeth; all which further testified to her astonishment and absorption.

"Then, child," said the prior, finishing his communication, "you see that you are to be trusted in weighty matters. Do you think yourself equal to managing them?"

"Oh, padre, yes," exclaimed the girl.

"Now, tell the senorita what I have said," he said, after a pause, "and that I will receive her and you for confession in the public church just after the angelus. She can tell her nurse that she is coming to confession. The nurse could not object to that. Let me see the old woman myself. I will make her come to church. And do you when she returns give her a good glass of aguardiente that she may sleep soundly to-night."

"Yes, father, I understand all," said Isabella, recovering her spirits, and bowing her head to receive her god-father's blessing before going to find Bettina.

Later in the day, after dinner, the prior paused for a little conversation, and Don Ignacio, gaily addressing him, asked:

"And when are the nuptials, father?"

"At midnight, my son," replied the monk, confidentially. "It must be thus late that the bride may leave home unsuspected, and also that there may be a mass as she piously desires. I depend upon you, Senor de Guzman, to give away the bride."

"Yes, if you assure me that it is a pious work and one justified by spiritual authority," said the elder De Guzman, with a little hesitation. His thin, dark face meantime, as the prior noticed, bore the marks of some severe internal disquiet and struggle.

"I do think, senor," replied the prior, gravely, "that in this case, if in no other, the course I am pursuing and in which I ask your help is perfectly justifiable."

"Then I yield my private judgment and will do whatever you desire," said the don, with a sigh of relief.

His son, however, looking at him askance, muttered:

"Not that this would do as precedent in the case of a noble dona marrying for the benefit of her family."

"And perhaps losing her own soul and theirs," replied Don Alphonso, hesitatingly, in the same tone.

The prior said nothing.

The angelus bell rang out over wild sierra and fertile valley, over brawling river and quiet field, and was heard even down the deep valley-road and around the grey stone walls of Miguel Lopez's squat farm-house.

The storm had abated and it no longer seemed extraordinary that the Senorita de Guzman, attended by her nurse and the two muchachos of the house, should proceed on donkeys and on

foot to the neighbouring church, and afterwards kneel in turn at the confessional, where the prior himself heard Carmita and Isabella while he deputed another monk to listen to Bettina and Dolores, whose needs were not upon that occasion so peculiar or imperative.

All the offices were now said. The monks, with the exception of the prior and Father Peter, who had been necessarily admitted into the secret, were safe in their cells, and would remain there until the bell for prime should arouse them.

The Senors de Guzman, wakened from the brief slumber recommended by the prior, followed Father Peter to the chapel and found the bridal party already assembled at the altar, the bride veiled from head to foot in white lace, an heirloom in the family of Lopez, and two other veiled and muffled female figures standing beside her.

The bridegroom, a stalwart young fellow, his face almost hidden in a luxuriant beard, stood at the other side with his best man. The latter, as the De Guzmans entered the lower end of the church, knelt, bowing his face upon the altar rail, as if in private prayer.

The church was lighted only by the two candles upon the altar; and Don Ignacio as he came up the nave, stumbled and nearly fell, causing a clatter, at which the bridegroom turned and looked towards him, displaying his face fully.

One of the bridesmaids also pushed aside her veiling mantilla, showing the merry brown face of Dolores, apparently not unwilling to be seen; in fact she rather seemed coquettishly to invite attention from Don Ignacio's bold, black eyes.

"A good-looking muchacha that, padre," whispered he to Father Peter, "and not an ill-looking fellow. Is that Roberto?"

"The bridegroom and his friend," whispered the monk, hurriedly. "Kneel here, senor, if you please; and you, senor, who give away the bride, follow me."

So saying he led the elder cavalier into the chancel, leaving Ignacio at the step, where, carelessly kneeling, he occupied himself in making eyes at Dolores, who, nothing loth, returned the glances with interest.

Father Peter disappeared in the sacristy, whence he presently returned followed by the prior, who immediately began the marriage service, the whole group of young people standing up together and so mingled with each other that Ignacio did not see that the bride's hand given by his father to the priest was placed, not in that of the bearded mozo, but in that of his companion.

The whole ceremony was so hurried and the dim light so baffling that, when the whole was over, and the prior solemnly pronounced the wedded pair man and wife with an anathema upon whosoever should disjoin them, neither Don Alphonso nor his son could have sworn which of the three women and the two men were the wedded ones.

The mass went on, and both cavaliers knelt to receive the sacrament in company with all the bridal party. When all was over the prior retired to unvest himself, but presently returned to the body of the church pale and agitated in spite of his air of decision and authority.

Going up to Don Alphonso, who stood with bowed head and contracted brows, deep in some bitter thought, he laid a hand upon his shoulder and said:

"Senor, you know how the prophet Nathan came to King David and told him of the rich man who would retain the lamb that he loved and sacrifice his neighbour's? and how, when the king exclaimed in indignation at his brother's harshness and selfishness, the prophet said 'Thou art the man,' and so out of his own mouth convicted him. You know the story?"

"Yes, father, I know it."

"And did the prophet do well, think you?"

"Surely, yes. He was a man of God."

"Then, my son, you cannot be angry that I have imitated him. You see the wrong to his own soul and to hers that Miguel Lopez would have done in sacrificing his daughter to a hoary villain, when her heart was given to a worthy

youth in every way suited to her, and "at you would go and do the very same thing with your own daughter."

The old man bowed his head upon his breast and groaned. The prior looked at him, and raising his own commanding figure to its full height, and looking steadfastly for a moment at the crucifix upon the altar, he beckoned the newly-married couple to approach and kneel at Don Alphonso's feet while he said, solemnly, almost sternly:

"Behold then how I have led you, my son, to square your actions with your convictions. 'Thou art the man,' and these are your children."

The veil dropped from the pale and frightened face of the bride.

"Carmita!" exclaimed the father.

Don Ignacio, roused by the cry from his flirtation with Dolores, to whom he had been whispering, pressed forward, and clenching his hand upon his dagger-hilt, exclaimed, as he saw the bridegroom's face:

"Thousand devils! what is this? Rafaelo de Orvieto, and Carmita!"

"His wife," quietly finished the prior, making the sign of the cross between the two young men, who eyed each other, the one in furious anger, hardly restrained by place or time, the other, with manly courage, not inviting a quarrel yet never shrinking from it.

It were too long to tell all that passed in the next hour, or to minutely describe the useless anger and stormy reproaches of Ignacio de Guzman, or the last struggle in the father's heart between baffled pride and ambition, and the fond love of his darling daughter, mingled with a certain vague dread of the ghostly consequences to himself of forcing her into an un-blessed marriage.

In the end the better feelings conquered, and when once he had yielded and placed his hand in blessing on Carmita's head, it was of small consequence that Ignacio, stormily swearing that he never would be reconciled to the marriage or meet his ancient foe as a new-made friend and brother, clattered out of the church, clanging his rapier against the stone floor and posts, and early next morning left the monastery alone.

"And now, dear friends," said the prior, when all was happily settled for the gentlefolk. "Now let us do a work of charity and unite in marriage this pair of humble lovers, who have helped their betters to a bliss they also aspire to share. Don Alphonso, will you still condescend to give away the bride?"

The grandee smilingly consented, and in a few moments more two happy brides, two proud bridegrooms, the contented prior, and the three-parts-reconciled father left the church.

Father Peter remained to extinguish the lights and moralise after his fashion on the wonderful events of the last four and twenty hours.

JAPANESE LUMINOUS PAINT.—There is nothing new under the sun. Few may trust a story, said to be derived from a Chinese Encyclopaedia, of a remarkable painting which was, some 900 years ago, in the possession of the Chinese Emperor Tai Tsung, having been originally the property of a certain Sir Nogh. The painting was one of an ox, and its peculiarity was that every morning it left its canvas to go grazing, and came back regularly at night. We must here observe that no evidence is given of the ox in question ever having been seen at grass, so we must put that down as a fabulous accretion to the story. The Emperor was naturally curious as to this ox, or picture, and, after the Oriental manner, familiar to us in the book of Daniel and elsewhere, demanded an explanation from all the wise men, which they, as a matter of course, were unable to give. At last came an old Buddhist priest, who revealed the trick. He said that the Japanese had the art of extracting a luminous substance from a certain kind of oyster, and that when this was mixed with paint the thing painted was invisible by day but became visible by night. Patents have lately

been taken out in Europe for a paint claiming to possess many of the qualities of the Japanese pigment, so "there is nothing new under the sun."

TRUE AS STEEL.

A SHORT STORY.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

"So now you know the worst."

"Yes. I know the worst."

Will Dabney, raised on one elbow, tossed pebbles into the sea with his other arm. He had an expression of reasonable interest in his occupation meanwhile on his face.

His companion looked thoroughly miserable, and Gertrude Storey's face was one that well expressed every shade of feeling. Disgraced—haunted by the dread of discovery—that was the shadow that had fallen upon her. Her betrothed had just avowed to her that he had tried to make good one crime—embezzling his uncle's money—with another crime—forgery.

"How could you do it?" asked Gertrude, presently, slowly, as though her brain were numb, and it took her a long while to rally her thoughts. "It was such a risk. You were almost certain to be found out. Is anything ever done in the dark in these days?"

"I was desperate. I had to get the money somehow; I was hounded down. The evil day was upon me; I wanted to avert it. But, you see, I simply postponed making a settlement. Besides, why should not uncle have helped me out of a scrape? I went to him in the first place and asked him for the money, the loan of it, all open and above board, and he turned me off like a dog. I don't forget either that in a sort he owed me the money twice over. It was solely through his bad management that my father failed, and died of a broken heart in consequence, leaving me without a rap to begin the world on when I was brought up with every expectation of being a rich man's son. Taking all this into consideration it is infamous in my uncle to ignore my claims. He has no right to cast me off. He owes me the amends."

"And you have heard—"

"I have heard that my cheque is protested—the cheque I gave Slocum on my uncle, which I filled up so cleverly. I have also heard that there is a warrant out against me on a charge of a deficiency in my accounts at the store. Hence I am here. If anyone can serve me you can. I knew I could have a few hours' breathing-time in this wretched, out-of-the-way place. I never could see before why you and your sister go to these one-horse summer taverns."

"But you must not stay even here," Gertrude said, briefly.

"I leave it to you. I don't pretend to know what I ought to do, or what I ought not to do."

"No. You must leave the country; that is your only chance. I can let you have the money. I have twenty pounds put aside for my autumn clothes. That will take you over there out of harm's way. You might go to Bremen. I have a cousin there who might help you."

"That John Luce?"

"That John Luce. He is a good fellow, although he did fall in love with me and made you jealous."

"Heaven! Why did you not have him? See what I have brought you too!"

She turned her pale grey eyes upon him; they were very pale—agua-marine colour to-day; but they could be dark and deep and passionate when the strange, sensitive pupils dilated and the blue-green edges melted into them.

When he had on his knees told her that he loved her, and she had fallen—literally—into his arms, so had it been with her odd, lovely eyes. Oh, now long ago that seemed! In fact it had been two years ago, when she was a mere child, although eighteen years old. Now she was

twenty; come to woman's years, having inherited woman's mood of sorrow.

She had loved him then; she loved him now. It was one of those mysterious, strong bonds of sympathy that exist here and there, as though to put at defiance all likings founded on esteem and reason. She loved him; he touched her heart; he appealed to her inmost affections as no one else had ever done, in spite of the vacillation and instability she had long since discovered in him, in spite of the wickedness which he was now revealing to her.

If she had been his wife she could have felt herself bound to him no more steadfastly. She had pledged him her word, it did not occur to her to break it.

And this, although heaven and earth were reeling around her, shaken to their foundations. She had believed him two years ago to be a man worthy of love, a man to lean on, a man who would protect her in time of trial and need; and now it had come to this, that he had come to her for protection instead. She had staked her all and she had lost.

She looked up to the dull heavens instinctively, as those of us are used to do when a trouble overtakes us, if in the days before we have had the habit of prayer. Where was the God she had prayed to? Did He hear? Would He heed? or would He turn away His countenance from them both because Will had sinned against His laws? In truth had Will sinned against the laws of God? Who could say whether man's laws were not harder and harsher than God's? At all events God could forgive. On, God! forgive us and pity us! was the poor girl's cry.

He was a good-looking scamp, this Will Dabney, as he sat and tossed pebbles into the sea. He had a bold, frank face, with blue eyes that looked directly into yours, golden hair, and the complexion of a ballet-girl at its carefullest. He was well dressed too, and he had the habit of society upon him.

He had had good advantages in fact, and there was little or no excuse for his backslidings since a good education and decent associations had counterbalanced his plebeian beginnings. When Gertrude had first known him he had been the curled darling of fortune. It was not until several months later that his father failed and his prospects altered.

"I suppose I had better get away from here to-day," suddenly.

As they had talked the sun dipped down into the sea. Gertrude drew out her watch.

"You can't go now," she said, "at least in the train. The last train went out at four. And yet I am afraid they will track you here. They will find out I am here. Stay, it will be better for you to walk across to Land's End and take the train there. That is a different road which comes into this one at Four Corners Junction. The same train that leaves Land's End at six connects with our four-o'clock train at seven. It is a mile to Land's End. Perhaps you could do it. Otherwise you must wait until morning, when a number of persons are leaving and you would be more noticed."

Will made up his mind in a flash.

"I will write to you from the junction. How about the money?"

"What you want to do is to throw them off the scent. Go up the road for twenty miles or so; then come back to this station; I will meet you, say the day after to-morrow at noon, and put the money in your hands. I can have it by that time by telegraphing. Should I decide that there is any risk for you in coming back here, meanwhile, I will telegraph you to Four Corners Junction, to let me see, what name? James Scott. Will that do?"

As she thus talked and planned she walked along rapidly with him towards Land's End—along the sands which were hard and shining and firm underfoot.

She clasped her cold white hands as she talked, and occasionally laid one, with a rapid, nervous gesture, against her cheek; but this was the only sign of excitement that she gave. Her voice was even and monotonous, if a

trifle hurried, and she was pale, as was her wont.

It was only at night, when a faint rose-leaf colour stained her cheek, that Gertrude had ever had the credit of being a pretty girl. But as Will Dabney—weak, inconsequent, superficial as he was—looked at her she was to him the most beautiful of women, the most fair, his feminine ideal. His soul—weak, shallow as it was—was stirred to its depths.

"My salvation," he said to her presently, hurriedly, as they parted.

He walked across to Land's End, where he missed the six train as it chanced. Gertrude set her face homeward—hotelward. As she neared the pavilion on the beach which fronted the hotel she found it occupied by a band of music.

There were lights between this and the hotel—darkness having enshrouded the September evening. As she reached the piazza the stage was unloading, and there was a hum of voices welcoming friends and announcing new arrivals. Gertrude ran up the steps and into her sister, a pretty, slight woman with a white shawl wrapped round her head.

"Where have you been, Gertie? I was getting so uneasy. I wish you would not stay out so late, dear. Such a lot of queer people have come to-night. Please look at that fat woman! Isn't she a fright? Let us have a peep at the register;" and Mrs. Heath put her hand through her sister's and led her into the office where the clerk was still engaged in transcribing the names of the newly-arrived.

Mrs. Heath, who was each day as keenly interested and excited in the arrivals as though on each day through the season she had not been disappointed in recognising any name she had ever heard of before, pulled the heavy volume towards her with a gentle smile on her amiable face, and proceeded with her scrutiny.

The way she spent her summers at present was a positive penance to her; cheapness and health must go hand in hand, and many disadvantages must be swallowed if only a place was cheap.

This had been the case at Bay Shore. It had been before a frightful experience, except that the children had been so healthy that it appeared to be her melancholy duty to engage rooms for the next year.

Her only consolation apparently was to live over her gay days as a girl at first one fashionable watering-place and then another. Perhaps it was because that she had studied the traveller's register at different places abroad that she liked to do so now at Bay Shore.

"Smith—Jones—Brown—Green. Not a soul we know."

Mrs. Heath murmured this to her sister, said something gracious to the officiating clerk, and moved away. The sisters stood in the front doorway, and looked out at the sea, across which a ship with a light at her prow was passing. The band played on. Another coach-load of people drove up, dismounted, and drifted about the piazzas.

"By-the-bye," Edith Heath said, "this is the night of the hop—of the great hop. I had almost forgotten. And these are the adjacent villagers arriving. I am glad I did not go to bed with the children, as I had half a mind to do at sunset, I was so bored. Now I shall enjoy the marine view. Let us sit here."

She dragged forward two huge chairs, in one of which she ensconced herself, while Gertrude followed her example in the other. Gertrude's attention was at its tensest. It was so important for her to inform herself as to what was going on around her to-night. Edith touched her arm.

"Look at that man," she said. "The one leaning against that pillar in the hall—in the ulster. I wonder who he is. He does not seem to belong to anybody. He has not been dancing. He has stood there in the same position for at least twenty minutes, looking about him. Watching, I should say."

"A policeman in disguise, do you suppose? Keeping a watch on the diamonds?"

"Hardly that. No, I shouldn't say he is a

policeman. He looks a touch above that. I should say—he is—a detective."

"Goodness, Edith, how unpleasant!"

"Yes," pursued Edith, warming to the situation, "a detective. It is in his every attitude and gesture. Look at him. There he leans, all eyes and ears, but with a look as though he had only a casual, passing interest in men and things. I wonder what he is after?"

"Your imagination has carried you away," Gertrude said. "What nonsense you are talking! As if a detective could find anything meet for his net in this dull place. A scandal would be a positive relief. But no, we are all too virtuous and too proper to bring anything so interesting as a detective about our heels. I'll ask the clerk who the man is, however. You have so far whetted my curiosity."

So they strolled up to the office desk again.

"The man in the grey ulster? Let me see—why, Brown—Joshua Brown—connected with some boot and shoe establishment," the clerk believed.

A travelling agent. The clerk fancied he had seen him before; last spring, perhaps. Those men always did their travelling in the spring and autumn. But as the two sisters leaned over the desk, and Edith abandoned herself to the pleasure of ferreting out her imaginary mystery, Gertrude heard a word behind her. The landlord had approached the man in the grey ulster and spoke.

"Disgraceful thing this—about young Dabney, I mean. Considering themselves quite the upper ten. I am rather surprised the old man did not hush it up."

"Is that the account?" inquired the other, taking the newspaper from him. "Ha—hum—pretty bad—in hiding. That's not a game that can be played very long. I should say."

"He was down here last summer," pursued the landlord, reflectively. "A good-looking young fellow—liberal with his money—"

"Brought up to consider himself a rich man's son, this says."

"Yes. More's the pity. By the way—"

Here he lowered his voice as he caught sight of Gertrude, and the two men moved off.

Gertrude felt instinctively that she had become the subject of the conversation, and that Grey Ulster was being informed of the bond between herself and Dabney. This was well known to all the Bay Shore people. As the landlord had stated, Will had been there the summer before, and the love affair had been watched with eager interest by all the hotel people, who had since felt a lively interest and a proprietorship in the lovers.

It had added to the sting of Gertrude's mortification and unhappiness that everyone around her was talking and watching and taking notes. As she walked away, she sighed convulsively and clutched her sister's arm. Strange to say, Edith was the only person at the hotel who had not heard. Edith never read the papers, and never gossiped with chance acquaintances.

The papers that came at noon had contained the bad news, and ever since Edith had been roaming the beach with her children, picking up shells and telling fairy stories. Gertrude had been with her, but had strayed off up the shore by a mysterious, secret divination. Then Will had joined her.

"Is there anything the matter?" cried Edith, now turning upon her.

"Nothing, except that you have made me nervous with your detectives and things. I feel as if I couldn't rest now until I find out about this man."

"And I feel as if I couldn't keep my eyes open a moment longer. Geordie coughed so last night that I couldn't sleep. What will you do? Will you come upstairs to?"

"No. I don't want to miss the moonlight. I will sit out on the piazza for a while. Lonely? Goodness, no. Don't you know me better than that? The moon and the 'long wash' of the ocean 'wave' are company enough for me."

Edith lingered long enough to see her sister ensconced in a quiet end of the piazza, a long path of moonlight meeting and enveloping her. She wrapped a shawl about her, went away a

step or so, returned, kissed her, then went for good. Some haunting feeling made her want to linger; it was as though her guardian angel were trying to make her understand that poor Gertie was in trouble, and needed her. Gertie leaned her cheek softly against her sister's hand, kissed it as softly, then pushed her away.

"Go, go," she said; "you are half asleep now. There is no reason you should be martyred because I happen to be an owl."

Then Edith went.

Gertrude abandoned herself to a flood of thoughts, drenched and whitened in the moonlight to only a ghostly likeness of the auburn-haired girl, whose changing, mobile features made her nearly beautiful when animated. It was not until she had sat thus absorbed in reverie for half an hour or more that the full realisation was hers of all that had befallen her. She must get Will out of the country; she must save him from the clutches of the law. After that life was a blank.

And life had hitherto been such a hopeful vision to her. Will was poor, to be sure, but she had, nevertheless, looked forward to being married to him soon—one of these days, in the near future—when they would be all in all to each other, and live in a bean-ideal of a little home, and lead useful, contented lives.

Observe that Gertie had always been what is called a sensible girl. She had never set her heart upon a life of mere pleasure. She had looked forward to being necessary and important to a small circle of people who would be in their turn beloved by her and necessary to her. Now it seemed to her that she could never lift up her head again—never.

She was identified with Will; she wished to be identified with Will; and she fully understood that Will would never again be received on equal terms into the society of honest men. The way of the transgressor is hard; she had been taught this, and she had believed this from her youth up. It came home to her now with a double conviction. Hard? Yes; and it seemed to her that the very ways of God were hard. Oh, if He had only killed her before He laid this burden upon her!

But it never occurred to her that she could forsake Will. She felt that she belonged to him as utterly as though she had been married to him. It happens sometimes that a weak and erring nature makes a passionate demand upon a stronger, truer one. Sometimes this happens between women. Sometimes a man makes such an exaction of a man.

Again it is the secret of a relation between man and woman; and I know of no sadder tie than that where all the strength and moral life come from the woman, who realises that a great, deep joy has gone from her, when, instead of looking up, she must perforce look down, and give of her abundance continually, with the knowledge that the starving soul she ministers to has absolutely nothing to give her in return.

In the midst of meditations such as I have suggested, Gertrude was startled by an admonishing cough. She looked up hastily; the man in the grey ulster was standing in full view.

"A pleasant night, miss," he said directly, with no show of diffidence whatever.

"Very pleasant," agreed Gertrude.

"Our friend Walby has a nice place here. Seems like a first-rate man. He and I have been discussing matters and things in there," indicating the office with his thumb, "discussing the papers like. Maybe you haven't seen the evening papers, miss. The Dabney affair is out in full to-night. Maybe you knew the young man?"

Gertrude rose. This was intolerable! She shrugged her shoulders.

"It is growing so chilly that I am going in," she said, coldly.

And she left him without more ado. But on her way to her own room she saw plainly that the detective—for this was plainly the man's office—had wanted to cross-question her about her lover.

Impertinent But she concluded that this

was only one of a long list of impertinences she would be called upon to endure.

She sat by her window all night thinking. She was up at dawn and had taken a dip in the sea, as the best refreshment she could think of, by six.

She would next take a stroll on the beach. But on her way through the hotel to make some change in her toilet after her bath, the clerk held out to her a telegram which had arrived for her.

It was the order for the money she sent for. She saw it counted out, and put it in an envelope, which she sealed standing there. Then she went to her room, then the beach.

Exactly in the same spot where she had met him the night before she met Will now.

"I thought you would never come," he said, somewhat querulously. "I thought you would guess—that is, I think of you as being endowed with supernatural insight. But here I am. I missed that train."

"You must not go by the next train out. There has been a detective at the hotel. He was eating his breakfast preparatory to leaving, as I came away just now. You will have to stay here until he goes. Let us walk on away from the hotel. The coast curves in suddenly below there, and we shall be quite out of sight."

"I fear I have lost my chance, sure. I am as weak as a cat and as timid as a baby in daylight. I shall never get away."

A strong, light boat rocked in a boat-house they just passed then. Gertie stopped short.

"Suppose—" she began.

She walked into the boat-house and seated herself in the boat. Will followed her.

"I have been studying the outward-bound steamers. One will be off here sometime this morning before noon. We might pull out to her on the chance of your getting on board. It is your best chance. I have the money I spoke of."

"But how would you get home again?"

"As God wills. Remember, we might not meet the steamer. Shall we risk it?"

Dabney had taken out a penny.

"Tail—I win," he announced, dropping the coin into his pocket again.

Gertrude shuddered at his levity, but perhaps it was less than she thought. It was the inveterate habit of his life to treat all subjects lightly.

Now his heart was heavy enough. But he took down the oars from their rack in the rafters of the boat-house and pushed off.

"I know the man this boat belongs to," Gertrude said, with a sigh of regret at the liberty she was taking. "I am sure he will forgive me."

"I don't much care if we only succeed in getting away," Will said, throwing the boat forward by her whole length. "Now, will you steer?"

He pulled for his life with but slight intermission for two hours, which brought them outside the cape. It was a calm, still morning, no ocean swells broke its tranquil repose. The little boat gently rocked to and fro. One or two sailing vessels passed them, eyeing them curiously.

It was unusual to see so small a craft so far out. A revenue cutter steamed across their path. Finally, in the far distance, a black column of smoke went up. Gertrude breathed a sigh of relief.

"There she is, at last!"

Will pulled towards her with all his might. Gertrude waved her handkerchief desperately, as she drew nearer and proved to be in very truth the vessel they had been looking for—the Octavia.

It was doubtful whether she would see them, or, seeing them, would heed, or, heeding, would understand their signals.

But she did see, she did heed, she appeared to understand, she slackened her great speed, and the little boat approached closer. Will stood up and shouted:

"Take me on board! Urgent business."

It was evident that they intended to comply

with his request. Then his heart sank within him—strangely—as it had not failed him during those past hours, when his escaping had hung in the balance.

He must have Gertrude! Was it worth while? Was anything worth while without her? He groaned aloud.

"Oh, Gertie!" he said, "I can't go. I would be less than a man if I could consent to leave you—to let you pull back by yourself across those dangerous waters."

Gertrude shook off his entreaties as roughly as she shook off his detaining hand upon her arm.

"This is not the time to make up your mind. You made it up within the last three hours. Regrets are worse than idle words. Go. Begin a new life." Then, as he turned from her, paler and graver than she had ever seen him, she added, "Remember I am yours unalterably, and I will come to you whenever you send for me."

In five minutes more he had gone up the ship's side. The men on deck shouted to Gertie to pull off a little, before they got under way again.

She obeyed mechanically. As she looked up at her lover she believed for a moment that he was going to throw himself headlong into the water, that he did not do so was due more to the restraining influence she exercised upon him than to any self-control of his. At that moment he was beside himself. The slight girl in the boat below him disappearing slowly from his view was his anchor of salvation and help. She represented to him all the abstractions of faith.

For her sake he had a vague intention of becoming a better man. Because he believed in her truth and in her goodness he had a feeble, wavering belief in a Higher Truth and Goodness. Thus does God lead us on step by step through a trust and a leaning on human infirmity to a trust and a leaning on Heavenly Perfection.

He made up a story on the spur of the moment—Heaven pardon him the lie—to account for his abrupt appearance, sans luggage of any description, and there was a certain genial attractiveness about the man which predisposed the captain in his favour.

Tito Melema has become a classic type for the successful impostor; this Will Dabney had enough of the Tito about him to predispose strangers in his favour. Candour and honesty were written on his brow. Besides, Gertrude had supplied him with money sufficient for his passage, and enough to supply his immediate personal needs out of the ship's stores.

His outfit was ludicrously at variance with his former pretensions, but he consoled himself with the reflection that the rough-looking fellow who now took his place as one of the passengers of the Octavia bore only an indistinct family likeness to the elegant dandy whose ties and shoes and socks and gloves had been the models of those of his acquaintances.

The strain over, blinding tears filled Gertie's eyes as she set out on her return voyage. She made very little headway. She was upon the point of giving way to a physical despair and inability to cope with the situation when she was hailed by a sailing vessel, in a voice which she recognised:

"Miss Storey! Is it possible? May I ask—"

"Not a question!" responded Gertie, rising equal to the emergency. "Behold me, a shipwrecked mariner, carried out of sight of land by the force of my own overwhelming ambition. It has all toppled over now. Will you take me in tow?"

Her friends in need were the owners of a little yacht, which ran up and down that part of the coast, and had been in the constant habit of putting into Bay Shore in bad weather and on a Sunday.

Charlie Deane had always secretly admired Gertrude. He was unusually zealous now in offering her the hospitalities of his craft. He piled up rugs for her to sit on; he warmed her a cup of coffee, and stood over her while she

drank it. He was altogether the most devoted and the most eager of hosts.

Two other young men were sailing with him, both of whom received Gertrude with that consideration which well-conditioned young men bestow upon a woman thrown upon their good offices—the air of being the recipients themselves of a personal favour.

Gertie's gloom increased as she looked at them. She could not but compare these prosperous, well-kept, cheerful youths with the outlaw she had just parted from. What had made the difference? In her love for Will she wanted to acquit him of the entire responsibility of blame. Was he not rather the victim of circumstances, of some inherited taint?

In her secret, innermost soul she arraigned Fate, Destiny, Providence; she could not have brought herself in this connection to use the personal name of the living God, but the universe all seemed so hard and antagonistic; in spite of which the sun shone on and the waters danced and sparkled in the radiance. The same glory of nature which that day cheered the heart of the just mocked the bewildered gaze of the unjust as well.

Finally they touched shore. Young Deane and his companions restored the borrowed boat to the boat-house where it belonged, and then accompanied Gertrude in a deputation to the boat's owner, to whom she desired to make her apologies. These were graciously received, although Gertrude was heartily laughed at for what her friend was pleased to call her freak.

"You should have someone to look after you—you need someone to look after you," said this benevolent personage, teasing her after the manner of patronising elderly gentlemen. "I shall have to give—" He was going to say, "I shall have to give Dabney a hint," but he remembered just in time.

The three young men standing by guessed what had been on his tongue too, and felt duly embarrassed; at the same time they pitied Gertrude sincerely. Dabney was a "bad lot." How strange, and what a pity that such a nice girl as this Miss Storey should ever have had anything to do with him!

The three young men insisted upon accompanying Gertrude back to the hotel moreover. Their arrival created the ripple of talk and excitement in the little hotel that any incident of the kind is sure to create in any little community. Under cover of this Gertrude escaped to her room.

It was not distinctly understood how far out she had "been carried"—this became the received version of her adventure—when she had been picked up. In fact Messrs. Deane and Co. were so thoroughly interesting to the maids and matrons at the Bay Shore House that they effectually swallowed up all conjecture, almost all interest, which Gertrude's adventure might otherwise have excited.

Only Edith followed her to her own room and hung over her, and plied her with questions, until finally Gertrude was fain to get rid of her with a point-blank:

"I am very unhappy. Pray leave me alone for awhile, my darling. Even you can't help me."

But by evening the news of the Dabney escape had penetrated even to Mrs. Heath. She went directly to her sister full of woe. Silly Gertrude had had an idea that she could keep this disgrace and anxiety from her sister by hook or by crook. She did not want to "bother Edith." But this reticence was not permitted her. She must perforce take her sister into her confidence.

To her great astonishment Edith assumed an attitude of authority and responsibility from the start. She had always felt herself to be Gertie's elder sister and in a certain undefined degree to occupy a mother's place towards her; but she had thus far held this position theoretically only. It was now borne in upon her that she must assume this stand practically.

She sat in front of Gertrude, holding her hand and gazing at her pensively and inquiringly for an hour at least, asking an occasional question,



[BY THE SAD SEA WAVES.]

but otherwise listening tranquilly to Gertrude's heart-outpouring, because now that the flood-gates were once broken down Gertrude's confessions were full and free.

She pitied her, she caressed her gently, she cried over her, but she offered her no advice. Nor had Gertrude expected that she would. It was not Edith's way to offer advice.

The pursuit of Dabney gradually died out. At the end of a week people had ceased to talk about the affair. At the end of that time also the man in the grey ulster had taken a final departure from Bay Shore.

He had succeeded in finding out absolutely nothing; and he finally disappeared with an uncomfortable misgiving that he had wasted a week and on the wrong scent after all. Gertrude's conduct completely deceived him. No girl could be so cool and self-possessed if she had a lover in hiding near by.

Depend upon it that, in the first place, she had given up the young man from the very outset of his disgrace; and in the second place, she had had no communication whatever with him from that same date.

One day Mrs. Heath announced that she was going to London. Gertrude kissed her good-bye, and as the train moved off and Edith leaned from the window and kissed her hand to her, she thought how pretty she was, how girlish-looking, in spite of the widow's weeds she had worn for three years now.

Arrived in London Edith consulted the direc-

tory before she embarked upon her self-imposed mission. She looked out the name of Mr. Wilson Dabney, commission agent. Having discovered at what wharf he was to be found she presently made her way there, climbing over dry-goods boxes, inhaling various most unpleasant odours permeating the atmosphere, being jostled against porters and draymen, and stared at by clerks out on their employers' business, who threw into their gaze an expression of as absolute wonder as though they had never seen a woman before.

Finally she worked her way to the Dabney counting-house, and from that succeeded in being introduced to Mr. Wilson Dabney's private room.

She found him an imperious, handsome man, between fifty and sixty, with his nephew's fresh complexion and his nephew's air of self-confidence; the latter altogether pardonable in a man of his marked success in life. To this commanding merchant prince Mrs. Heath named herself and immediately stated her errand.

"I have come on my own responsibility," she began. "But I am urged to intercede with you on my dear sister's account. My sister is Gertrude Storey. You may have heard of her. She is the girl to whom your nephew William Dabney is engaged."

"Was engaged, perhaps you mean. Your sister can hardly propose to link her fate with a felon. My nephew has forfeited his claim upon all his previous relations."

"On the contrary, my sister feels herself bound to him now more strongly than ever. Plighted faith is not so lightly regarded by the women of our family."

And Mrs. Heath threw up her handsome head with flashing eyes.

"My nephew has cut himself off from all decent society. He has cast in his lot with the infamous of his own will and deed."

"We do sue for mercy," pleaded Mrs. Heath. "Deal with this wretched boy as you would yourself be dealt with at the last day. Do not drive him to destruction. While there is life there is hope. God hears the sinner's cry as long as he cries; it is the one point on which He insists that we shall be like Him. Do you believe in God? Refuse pity and help to your nephew and you practically bar the gates of Heaven upon yourself. Forgive as you would be forgiven."

Mr. Dabney strode up and down the room. No one had ever so appealed to him before, had so moved him before. He stood in front of Mrs. Heath at last.

"What would you have me do?" he asked.

She was a wise woman. She knew where to stop, where to cease to pursue an advantage.

"You know better than I do what will help him best," she said. "I cannot pretend to counsel you in worldly matters. Only assure me that you will forgive him and I will tell you where he is."

He seated himself at his desk.

"I yield," he said. "It may be I yield to a mere mawkish sentiment, but I yield. I will do the best I can for the unhappy young man."

Mrs. Heath gave him the address of her Cousin John Luce, in Bremen, to whom Will was to report on arriving there. Then she rose to go.

"I would like to confer with your sister," Mr. Dabney said, "either personally or by letter, as she pleases."

Whereupon Mrs. Heath gave him their Bay Shore address as well. He saw her to the door and they parted.

He was as good as his word. In all his life he had never failed in a promise. Perhaps Edith had felt this, and hence had parted from him with an absolute assurance that he would do even more than he had agreed. The next week, in accordance with a request of Gertrude's, he made his appearance at Bay Shore. Here definite plans for Will's future were discussed. Gertrude advised and suggested as though she were already Will's wife.

In six months' time she was. She joined him in Germany, where they have made their home, and where he is now working hard in his uncle's business interests. I fancy that no one who knows Will Dabney entertains a doubt as to his having sown his wild oats most thoroughly.

Another wedding grew out of all this. It is a constant joke with Gertrude that relationships are so dreadfully mixed she never remembers whether Edith is her aunt and Will's sister, or her sister and Will's aunt. Odd, isn't it, how things turn out?

PLANTS BLOOMING WITHOUT EARTH.—M. Alfred Dumesnil, a son-in-law of Jules Michelet, and the editor of the first edition of Edgar Quinet's works, claims to have made an interesting and useful discovery—how to preserve plants in a perfectly vigorous state without any earth. Since November, 1880, the date at which his researches proved successful, he has, with the exception of a six weeks' stay in Paris, been continually taking plants from the ground and applying its process to them; has never found the least interruption in their vegetable functions; on the contrary, winter and spring plants have blossomed with a vigour which, as an experienced horticulturist, he has never seen in his garden. M. Dumesnil exhibited some specimens of plants blooming without earth in the Square Solvay, in Rouen, last December; and at his home at Vascœuil, about fourteen miles from that city, anyone may have ocular

demonstration of the results he has obtained. In any light, the discovery is an interesting one, and its applications are numberless, and the fresh scope it would give to the floral decoration of interiors delightful to contemplate.

THE ISLE OF MAN.

THERE is a patch in the Irish Sea called the Isle of Man. On a sunny day the highlands of Ulster, in Ireland, and of Galloway, in Scotland, are visible from its western shore; and from the summit of Snaefell Mountain England is seen fretting in the golden haze across the sea. Small as this island is it has a government of its own, and a thrilling and eventful history. Hawthorne found it out while he was a consul at Liverpool, and has praised it in his "English Note-books." Scott gathered material for "Peveril of the Peak" from its romantic scenery and legends, and Wordsworth commemorated a visit to it in a sonnet.

In its greatest length the island measures about thirty-three miles, and in its greatest breadth about thirteen. In circumference it is seventy-five miles, excluding the sinuosities of the bays; and it contains a superficial area of about one hundred and thirty thousand acres, or two hundred and three square miles. Enjoying the benefits of the Gulf Stream the climate is singularly mild and genial, and there are few other places in the world where the difference between summer and winter is so slight. As to the healthfulness of the climate, you would find proof in the native girls—rosy-cheeked, plump, active, and gleeful; and the men are as stalwart, masculine, and handsome a race as breathe sea air.

Most of the coast is rocky and wild, hoar with the foam of the turbulent sea that surrounds it, and indented with capacious harbours and innumerable creeks; but in the north the land sinks into a low pasturage, and meets the water on the glistening pebbles of a smooth beach. The interior includes nearly every kind of natural scenery—heather-clad, balsamic hills, plains richly cultivated, wide reaches of prickly gorse as drear as Yorkshire moors, and the prettiest of cascades. The enchantment of northern land dwells in its subdued light and on its mist-crowned heights.

Sleepy villages are perched on the cliffs where once the beacon-fires of the wreckers allured many a goodly ship to her doom. In the bays where the pirates hid themselves of old fly the white sails of pleasure-boats. The present invaders are not Romans, Picts, nor Scandinavians, but aggressive tourists, bearing knapsacks instead of eagles, and walking-sticks instead of javelins. These confront you in nearly every part of the island; and the primitive character of the natives is fast changing under the influence of the town manners which the visitors bring with them. Many of the superstitions have been laughed away, but there are not a few honest folks who yet have a steadfast faith in mermaids and fairies.

HORRORS OF THE SIBERIAN MINES.

THE exiles who live in the quicksilver mines of Siberia are convicts of the worst type and political offenders of the best. The murderer for his villany, the intelligent Polish rebel for his patriotism, are deemed equally worthy of the punishment of slow death. They never see the light of day, but work and sleep the year round in the depths of the earth, extracting silver or quicksilver under the eyes of masters who have orders not to spare them. Iron gates, guarded by sentries, close to the lodges or streets, at the bottom of the shafts, and the miners are railed off from one another in gangs of twenty. They sleep within recesses hewn out of the rock—

very kennels—into which they must creep on all fours.

Prince Joseph Lubomirski, who was authorised to visit one of the mines of the Oural at a time when it was not suspected he would ever publish an account of his exploration in French, has given an appalling account of what he saw. Convicts racked with the joint-pains which quicksilver produces; men whose hair and eyebrows had dropped off, and who were as gaunt as skeletons, were kept to hard labour under the lash. They have only two holidays a year, Christmas and Easter; and all other days, Sundays included, they must toil until exhausted nature robs them of the use of their limbs, when they are hauled up to die in the infirmary.

Five years in the quicksilver pit are enough to turn a man of thirty into an apparent sexagenarian, but some have been known to struggle for ten years. No man who has served in the mines is ever allowed to return home; the most he can obtain in the way of grace is leave to come up and work in the road gangs, and it is a promise of this favour as a reward for industry which operates even more than the lash to maintain discipline. Women are employed in the mines as sifters, and get no better treatment than the men. Polish ladies by the dozen have been sent down to rot and die, while the St. Petersburg journals were declaring that they were living as free colonists; and, more frequently, ladies connected with Nihilist conspiracies have been consigned to the mines in pursuance of a sentence of hard labour. It must always be understood that a sentence of Siberian hard labour means death. The Russian government well knows that to live for years in the atrocious tortures of the mines is humanly impossible, and, consequently, the use of a euphemism to replace the term capital punishment is merely of a piece with the hypocrisy of all official statement in Russia. Once a week a pope, himself an exile, goes down into the mines to bear the consolations of religion, under the form of a sermon, enjoining patience. By the same occasion he drives a lively trade in vodka.

The miners, who live habitually on tshi and black bread, are allowed a kopeck for a good day's work, and this sum invariably goes in drink. Perhaps the raw, rancid spirit serves to keep up the strength; anyhow, the intoxication it brings on affords the unfortunates the only dreg of comfort they can expect on earth. One shudders to think of the state of the better educated men who refuse the consolation of occasionally drowning their sorrows in liquor. What must be the plight of professors, journalists, land-owners, who have been condemned to die by inches for the crime of emitting liberal opinions, which in England bring a man to great honour and comfort on every side?

A FEARLESS SNAKE CATCHER.

SIGNOR D'ALBERTIS, a recent explorer in New Guinea, is a remarkably bold seeker after snakes. In an account of his travels he says that at Yule Island the natives had found a large snake under a tree, and all ran away from it, crying out.

"At last I went to the natives," he continues, "and tried to ascertain the cause of their conduct, and they made me understand why they had fled. I then returned to see the snake myself, which in fact I did, although two-thirds of its length were hidden in a hole in the earth. His size was such that I concluded he could not be poisonous, and I at once grasped him by the tail. While dragging him out of his lair with my two hands I was prepared to flatten his neck close to his head with one foot the moment he emerged, so that he should not have the power of turning or moving. My plan succeeded perfectly, and while the snake's head was imprisoned under my foot I grasped his body with my hands, and, as though I had vanquished a terrible monster, turned towards the natives with an air

of triumph. They, struck with terror, had looked upon the scene from a safe distance. I must confess that the snake offered little resistance, although it writhed and twisted itself round my arm, squeezing it so tightly as to stop the circulation, and make my hand black. I remained, however, in possession of its neck, and soon secured it firmly to a long thick stick I had brought with me. I then gave the reptile to my men to carry home."

This serpent was thirteen feet long. It was kept alive and became quite tame, and when the natives saw D'Albertis kiss its head and let it coil round his legs they howled with amazement and admiration.

Six weeks after the capture he writes:

"My snake continues to do well; it has twice cast its skin, is well behaved and tame, and does not attempt to escape, even when I put it in the sun outside the house, and when I go to bring it in it comes to me of its own accord. It never attempts to bite, even when I caress or tease it. While I am working I often hold it on my knees, where it remains for hours; sometimes it raises its head and licks my face with its forked tongue. It is a true friend and companion to me. When the natives bother me it is useful in putting them to flight, for they are much afraid of it; it is quite sufficient for me to let my snake loose to make them fly at full speed."

He kept this serpent for nearly six months, and latterly another of the same species with it, till at last both of them escaped, and he mourned their loss as of dear friends, adding, "for I loved them and they loved me, and we had passed a long time together."

LARGE CUTTLE FISH.

ALL exact information about gigantic Cephalopoda is of interest not only as showing what immense marine creatures do exist, but as preparing us for the possibility of meeting with still greater. Professor Verrill has collected a great deal of accurate and recent information as to the North American species, of which he publishes a list in the April number of the "American Journal of Science," from which we call the following:

On November 2, 1878, a fisherman was out in a boat with two other men near Leith Bay Copper Mine, Notre Dame Bay, when they observed some bulky object not far from shore, which they approached, thinking it might be part of a wreck. To their horror they found themselves close to a large fish having big glassy eyes. It was making desperate efforts to escape, and was churning the water into foam by the motion of its immense arms and tails. Finding it partially disabled they plucked up courage and threw the boat's grapnel, which sank into its soft body. By means of the stout rope attached to the grapnel and tied to a tree the fish was prevented going out with the tide; its struggles were terrific, as, in a dying agony, it flung its great arms about. At length it became exhausted, and as the water receded it expired. Its body, from the beak of the mouth to the extremity of the tail, measured twenty feet, and one of the tentacles, or arms, measured thirty-five feet.

This is the largest specimen yet measured of *Architeuthis princeps*. Professor Verrill mentions eighteen species as now known on the north-eastern coast of America.

MONSTROUS FUNGI.

VISITORS to ancient wine vaults or damp coal pits are sometimes astonished by the curious fungi which drape the walls with gruesome tapestry; but every instance of this kind is thrown into the shade by the extraordinary growths which have recently been discovered in

some of the deserted Mexican silver mines of Nevada, United States. The dank, warm timber galleries and drifts of these old workings, abandoned to themselves for years, have silently given birth to a monstrous brood of morbid vegetation, which, apparently, has no parallel in the regions of the sunlight and the upper air. In general they are all of a snowy whiteness, and some of the hooded masses rise up several feet from the ground like sheeted ghosts. Others, in the distance, take the form of bearded goats or sleeping owls. Here great bunches of long white hair hang down from the roof; and there huge pulpy masses encumber the floor like bosses of brainstone coral. The latter appear to have sprung miraculously from something spilled upon the rocks in past days; while the former seem to have crystallised like hoar-frost from the atmosphere itself.

Some of the rounded masses have actually lifted up from the floor blocks of stone weighing ten, fifty, and even a hundred pounds, to a height of three feet.

In the higher levels of the mines, where the air is drier, the fungi are far less bulky than below, and much firmer in texture. The shapes are here, however, more elaborate and beautiful. One kind grows in a twisted spiral, like a ram's horn, to a length of five feet, and hangs from the rafters like a trophy of the chase, or, rather, like a serpent suspended by the tail. Another sort sends out a stem the thickness of a pencil to a height of one or two feet, where it blossoms into a bulbous knob something like a flower. Nothing like the toadstool or the common mushroom is to be found, and the wondrous growths have all the aspect of being called into a special being by the peculiarities of their environment.

FACETIÆ.

"THE CLAIMS OF GREASE."

THE new American compound called oleomar garine is said to far surpass butterine, and to be an excellent substitute for butter at less than half the price. Our dairyman keeps a savage goat in the back yard, so as to be able to swear he has always a real good "butter" on the premises.

"A BRIGHT LITTLE ISLE OF OUR OWN."

IN some churches the seats on the right are devoted exclusively to the ladies, and those on the left to the gentlemen. The latter is called the Aisle of Man.

GARDENING IN THE METROPOLIS.—There is talk of transplanting the Mint on Tower Hill to the Thames Embankment.

WHAT IT HAS COME TO.

Mrs. MUGGLES: "Well, doctor, I don't know as what's the matter with Marier since she come from her last siterwation in Lunnon. There she sits all day a-staring at an old chimney dish, which she calls a-going in for 'asthletix!'"

EASTER-EGGS AT ST. PETERSBURG; OR, HOW THEY DIVIDE 'EM.

THE Nihilists to Alexander the Third—the shell.

Alexander the Third to the Nihilists—the yoke.

AT THE SENIOR UNITED.

COLONEL (to pompons steward): "Hullo, how's this? I see woodcocks five shillings. Why, at the Junior they only charge four."

STEWART: "Very likely, sir. The Junior 'ud heat hanythink!"

BUDDHISM is greatly on the increase at present; don't be alarmed at the report, though—it is the proper season for budism on the trees, isn't it?

THE faction every Englishman would like to see predominant in Ould Erin—satisfaction, of course! only it's a long time coming to the front.

FACTS NOT FREQUENTLY MADE A NOTE OF.

THAT hens in the Sandwich Islands are layers of bread and butter.

THAT the best whitebait is caught off Black-wall.

THAT Jeanne d'Arc was fair to see.

THAT the porters on the Great Northern Railway are not allowed stout.

THAT the Chinese Feast of Lanterns is only a light repast.

THAT bill-stickers are always laid out on four-posters.

THAT Woolwich infants are vaccinated in Cannon Street.

THAT the roots of the hare generally die game.

THAT the best seat in a Law Court is "facing the truth."

THAT drawing on your imagination won't rub out.

THAT the bread of repentance is often made of wild oats.

A PLAIN "TIE."—A matter-of-fact quarrel.

A COOL NOTION.

SOME ingenious creature, in America, of course, is building a steamer for the express purpose of towing icebergs to India, where ice sells at a high figure. Another still more inventive man proposes to affix a screw to the iceberg itself, and so do away with any necessity for building a vessel at all. There would certainly be a great advantage in this latter kind of steamer, because the captain would never have any difficulty in getting it coaled.

THE British workman is a highly moral character, as we all know; but it might be interesting to find out how many vices a carpenter has.

IN STATU QUO.

IT is stated the statue of the late Thomas Carlyle, which is to be erected on the Thames Embankment not far from the venerable seer's residence, will represent the philosopher in a sitting position. Seriously, we suppose, he has been depicted sitting on account of there being so many things he couldn't "stand."

THE LAST OF THE SEASON.

HUNTSMAN: "Come to have your last hunt with us, sir?"

BROWN: "Last! Well, no, I hope not. There's next year, you know—"

HUNTSMAN: "Very true, sir. But life's uncertain, sir, and a man gone to earth ain't like a fox gone to earth, is he, sir?"

TRANSEVAL SNAKES.—Boer-constrictors.

CONSCIENTIOUS; OR, A CENSUS CON.—Why is a bad tooth like the interval between the Censuses? Because it's one decade (dec—no, it's not necessary).

AFTER A RACE.

1ST SPORTING PROPHECY: "You look glum. You ought to have made a pot; Pepperbox has won—your own prediction."

2ND S. P.: "Yes, Pepperbox was my prediction; but I put my money upon Chicory. By-the-bye, Chicory was your prediction; I suppose you've lost a heap, like me?"

1ST S. P.: "Well, no. Chicory was my prediction; but, as a matter of fact, I backed Pepperbox. I can hardly believe it, but I'm blowed if I haven't actually won!"

A PERVERSE-ET RHYME.

SING a song of Census

And a pack of lies,

Four-and-twenty million

Fraudulent replies.

When the pile was opened,

Brydges 'gan to sing—

"Isn't there a lot of girls

Young as anything!"

THE ARCTIC CIRCLE.—A snow wreath.

MOONSHINE.

A BIG COUNT.—The Censuses. MOONSHINE.

THE LIMITED MALE.—A dwarf.

MEMBERS OF THE HUNT.—Detectives.

"I'm reduced to the ranks," as the carriage-horse said on finding itself in the shafts of a cab.

SPRING POETRY.—Rime, frosts. MOONSHINE.

THE SOLDIER'S LAST MEAL.—Licking the dust.

A HOME FOR INCURABLES.—Kilmainham Jail.

THE "MAY" QUEEN.—Queen Victoria (born 24th).

UTILISING THE CENSUS.

HEAD OF FAMILY (to his daughter's intended, whom he is determined to bring to book): "Let me see—John Dangle, visitor. Why, bless my soul, I recollect writing down those very words last time."

DANGLE: "Yes—er—I'm afraid that was so. But—but—it shan't occur again!"

Rash youth! Only to give himself another ten years' grace.

INTERESTING EXCEPTION.

SCENE—Drawing-room in Grand Hotel.

Manager filling up census paper.

LADY (presuming on her youthful appearance): "Age? Oh, twenty-three."

MANAGER (who has just filled in particulars as to lady's daughter): "Pardon me, madame. There are several instances in the hotel in which mother and daughter are of the same age; indeed, that would seem to be the rule. But your case is quite exceptional; I have not before met with any lady who was younger than her daughter!"

THE INNOCENT AT THE BOAT RACE.

(And what he wants to know, you know.)

Is the "coaching" performed in a "gig"?

Why isn't the annual "tubbing" of the crews done at the Soapworks?

As the crews have to be in their places "at the time the tide serves," is this what is meant by being "tide to time"?

Is the "state of the current" ascertained with a "plumb"?

Is the "final spin" done at "top speed"?

Does the "fast running ebb" run on the top-path?

Do the crews plume themselves at all upon their "feathering"?

Is the "bow" oar a toxophi-lite weight?

How would the "stroke" be in a "scratch race"?

Is the coxswain selected because of his acquaintance with the row-pes?

Isn't there some self-denial on the part of the coxswain, seeing that he doesn't get any "pull" out of the race himself?

Is it the more "forward" of the two boats that's the likelier to "hug the shore"?

Is it considered a "knotty end" when the "blue ribbon race" results in a "tie"?

When we read of a crew being mustered at the beginning of a race, does that signify that they mean to let their rivals have it "pretty hot"?

What has the scaling of the crew to do with the "way" on the boat?

We hear a great deal about rowing on a "nice ebb," but is it possible to row on an ice-floe?

FUNNY FOLKS.

NO CHANGE GIVEN.

So the motion in favour of decimal coins, weights, and measures was ruled out by a large majority. Until Parliament can coincide as to its expediency, we shall have to wait for that measure.

A "GOLDEN" OPINION.

OUR friend Max Muddler believes that millionaires are vaccinated from the "Golden Calf."

FLOWERS TO WEAR AT A BOAT RACE.—Row-dodendrons.

FUNNY FOLKS.

STATISTICS.

COTTON SPINNING.—According to a recent estimate, the number of spindles employed in cotton spinning over the whole earth is about 71,250,000; of this, in round numbers, 39 millions belong to England, 10 millions to the United States, 5 to France, 5 to Germany, 3 to Russia, 2 to Switzerland, etc. For every 1,000 inhabitants, there are in England, 1,180 spindles; in Switzerland, 676; in the United States, 218; in France, 135; in Germany, 108; in Spain, 103; in Holland, 67; in Sweden and Norway, 48; in Austria-Hungary, 42; in Russia, 30; in Italy, 25.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND MINISTERS.—From a return recently made to the House of Commons from the Privy Council Office, it appears that in the year 1879 there was a total number of 11,186 resident incumbents, 1,509 non-residents, 387 curates in sole charge, and 4,888 assistant curates. The stipends paid to curates in sole charge varied from nothing to £300 a year; in four cases the curates received the whole income of the benefice. Thirty-two received £80 a year; 78, £100; 43, £120; 26, £130; 83, £150; and 22, £200 a year. Of the assistant curates, 4 were receiving £10 a year and 3 £400, while 2 took the whole income. A nominal stipend only was given to 211; 162 received £200; 221, £160; 1,109, £150; 361, £140; 471, £130; 1,014, £120; and 439, £100. Some few were paid by offertories or fees or pew rents. A somewhat curious addition to these figures has since been furnished by Mr. C. Powell, who states that the stipend of the senior curate of St. Alban's, Holborn, is five shillings per annum.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

STEWED PRUNES.—Place the prunes in a covered pan with a little warm water and sugar, some ground cinnamon, and a little lemon-peel; stew gently for one hour, and shake now and then. They must not be stewed in too much water, so that when they are quite soft only some rich syrup remains.

WHAT HOUSEKEEPERS SHOULD KNOW.—That parsley eaten with vinegar will remove the unpleasant effects of eating onions. That cakes, puddings, etc., are improved by making the currants, sugar, and flour hot before using them. That lamp shades of ground glass should be cleaned with soap or pearl ash; these will not injure or discolour them. That earthy mould should not be washed from potatoes, carrots or other roots, until immediately before they are cooked. That white satin shoes may be cleaned by rubbing them with blue and stone flannel, and afterwards cleaning them with bread. That cold boiled potatoes used as soap will clean the hands and keep the skin soft and healthy. Those not over-boiled are the best. That charcoal powder is good for polishing knives without destroying the blades. It is also a good tooth powder when finely pulverised. That potato water in which potatoes have been scraped, the water being allowed to settle and afterwards strained, is good for sponging dirt out of silk. That straw matting may be cleaned with a large coarse cloth, dipped in salt and water, and then wiped dry. The salt prevents the straw from turning yellow. That tea-leaves, used for keeping down the dust when sweeping carpets, are apt to stain light colours; salt is best in the winter and new-mown hay in the summer. That a piece of linen cloth dipped in turpentine and wrapped round the toe on which a soft corn is situated will give relief, and after a few days the corn will disappear. That rusty black Italian crape may be restored by dipping in skimmed milk and water, with a bit of fine glue dissolved in it, and made scalding hot. It should be clapped and pulled dry like muslin. That the white of an egg, into which a piece of alum about the size of a walnut has been stewed until

it forms a jelly, is a capital remedy for sprains. It should be laid over the sprain upon a piece of lint, and be changed as often as it becomes dry. That a lump of fresh quick-lime the size of a walnut dropped into a pint of water and allowed to stand all night, the water then being poured off from the sediment and mixed with a quarter of a pint of the best vinegar, forms a good wash for scurf in the head. It is to be applied to the roots of the hair.

IN LILAC LANE.

The fragrant boughs of blossom
Were arching all the way;
And changeful skies of April,
With light and shade at play,
Smiled clear with gleams of sunshine,
Or grieved with fitful rain—
That happy day in spring-time,
We walked in Lilac Lane.

I see her white dress fitting
Beside me, even now;
One rounded arm up-lifted
To bend the swaying bough;
The nodding plumes, in answer,
Sent down a perfumed rain,
To hide her silken tresses,
That day in Lilac Lane.

Oh, leave the hough to frolic
With every passing breeze;
The spring will soon be over,
For fragile blooms like these.
And listen to my story:
If gladness, or if pain,
Shall be its end—I know not—
This day in Lilac Lane.

Sweet eyes, where maiden fancies
Lie mirrored in the blue,
They will not raise their fringes,
To make me answer—true;
The little hand that trembles
Upon my arm is fain
To cling a moment closer,
That day in Lilac Lane.

No, I will not name the story
I whispered in her ear;
It was for me to tell it—
It was for her to hear;
And any careless listener
The secret would profane,
Of what was asked and answered,
That day in Lilac Lane.

Again the plumes of lilac
Are sending down their spray,
As underneath their fragrance
We take our happy way;
For, hand in hand, together—
Thro' sunshine and thro' rain—
We pledged our troth for ever,
That day in Lilac Lane.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Royal Toxophilite Society, having completed the hundredth year of its existence, intend holding a grand centenary celebration in October next.

A **Boston** journal states that there is on exhibition in that city a Mexican lady who plays the piano with her feet!

MISS NEILSON, it may be remembered, left the bulk of her fortune to Admiral Carr Glyn. It is now, we understand, the intention of this gentleman to set aside the sum of £3,000, the interest of which shall be devoted to the relief of necessitous members of the profession which Miss Neilson so long adorned. The administra-

tion of the money will be undertaken by the gallant admiral himself, and by Messrs. Henry Irving and J. L. Toole, who have acceded to his request to join him in the good work.

Two bronze sphinxes are to be placed one on either side of Cleopatra's Needle on the Victoria Embankment. One looking towards Westminster and the other towards the city. Each sphinx will be 19ft. long by 6ft. wide, and 9ft. over all, and will weigh about seven tons.

POSKY COUNTRY, Indiana, claims to have raised the largest cow in the world. Her name is Lady Posey; breed, mixed Durham and Big English. Her measurements are: greatest height, 5 feet 10 inches; girth, 8 feet 9 inches; length, 10 feet 6 inches, or, including tail, 17 feet. Her form is good; and, though not fat, she weighs 3,000 pounds. Her colour is red and white, red predominating. Age, six years. Her present owner lives in Stark County, Illinois.

A **MOVEMENT**, which certainly deserves success, is on foot to provide good bands of music in the parks during the summer evenings. It is to be hoped there will be no official opposition, and in that case it will be but a question of money, which ought to be cheerfully raised.

At a certain West End Club a young man lately lost £10,000 in a single night. Several of our jeunesse dorée have lately got rid of sums approaching, and in one instance exceeding, that amount. The scandal is perfectly well known to the world.

THE new combined postage and receipt stamp is to be issued almost at once. Amalgamation is the order of the day as much in the departments under the Treasury as in our railroads. Excise and Customs are to a great extent to become one; at least, in all essential particulars; and now Stamps, which is a branch of the service, is to amalgamate with the Post Office. The size of the new stamp will be somewhat larger than the present stamp, and it will have on it the legend, "For postage and receipt," thus marking out that it has a double debt to pay.

It is stated that a new gold five-shilling piece may possibly be coined and put in circulation.

THE Registrar-General will have cause to lament the existence of the practical joker. In several cases of census paper returns the husband has returned his wife as the head of the family, and himself as an idiot to marry her. "Married, and I'm heartily sorry for it," has been returned in two cases; and to put "Temper" under the head of infirmities opposite the name of the wife seems to be the generally fashionable joke.

MR. ASHMEAD BURDETT-COUTTE-BARTLETT has been admitted to the freedom and livery of the Turners' Company, in which, as an honorary member, Lady Burdett-Coutts has taken so much interest.

It is stated that the Rev. W. H. Jervis, vicar of St. Paul's, Colchester, has succeeded in finding the registration of the marriage of his grandfather, by which he becomes entitled to the position of Lord St. Vincent.

A **LARGE** memorial window for St. Paul's Cathedral, to commemorate the restoration of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales to health some few years since, is in course of preparation.

A **BOMBAY** paper mentions a rumour that our Government are about to lease Goa, on the West Coast of Africa, from the Portuguese, at a rental of £270,000 a year.

ABOUT three miles from Clear Lake, Napa, county California, and near the borax lake, is a sulphur bank, 20 to 30 acres in extent and 40 feet deep. This is sufficiently pure for use in the San Francisco mint.

ARE British manufactures inferior to those of other foreign countries? Mr. Anderson brought a long array of facts and figures before the House of Commons the other night, to prove that our supremacy was totally gone, while Mr. Mundella declared that there was no decadence of our manufactures—no inferiority to foreign producers. When doctors disagree, who shall decide? Everyone, however, agrees that our workmen want more technical education, and a voluntary commission (Mr. Mundella won't grant a royal one) is to collect evidence as to foreign technical schools.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS should in all cases furnish us with their names and addresses. Letters signed simply with initials or a nom de plume may not always receive immediate attention, as our space is limited. No charge is made under any circumstances for advertisements appearing on this page.

E. W.—The heart beats 75 times in a minute; sends nearly 10 pounds of blood through the veins and arteries each beat; makes four beats while we breathe once.

L. H.—The pores of the body are estimated at 7,000,000. Each pore is the outlet of a tube one-fourth of an inch long. This makes the whole length of tubing in the skin for the purpose of sewerage nearly 23 miles.

M. A.—To make Tom and Jerry, take five pounds of sugar, twelve eggs, half a small tumbler of Jamaica rum, one and a half teaspoonfuls of ground cinnamon, half a teaspoonful of cloves, and half a teaspoonful of allspice. Beat the whites of the eggs to a stiff froth, and the yolks until they are as thin as water; then mix together, and add the spice and rum, thickening with sugar until the mixture attains the consistency of a light batter. A punch-bowl is generally used in making Tom and Jerry. To deal it out, take a small tumbler, and to one table-spoonful of the mixture add one wine-glassful of brandy, and fill the glass with boiling water, grating a little nutmeg on top.

INQUIRE.—The Chemists' Aerated and Mineral Waters Association, 45, Gifford Street, London, N., and Harrogate, manufacture a very excellent stimulant called Bubbins, or Bark Beer, which deserves, and is destined, to become widely known and appreciated as an agreeable effervescent beverage, perfectly innocuous and of extreme value as a medicated tonic. It is had, we believe, of chemists only.

N. H.—A solution of pearlsh in water thrown upon a fire extinguishes it instantly. The proportion is four ounces dissolved in hot water, and then poured into a bucket of common water.

F. E. H.—Respecting the advisability of revaccination we cannot do better than quote the following from an article by a medical man in the columns of a contemporary: "With regard to the protective power of vaccination, there is now no doubt that it may be exhausted in time, and that though the percentage of vaccinated persons who are afterwards affected by smallpox is very small, yet it is clear that one single and perfect vaccination does not for all time and in all cases deprive the system of its susceptibility of various diseases."

O. S.—For hot cross buns mix half an ounce of German yeast with a little milk; then take two pounds of flour, half a pound of butter, and half a pound of powdered sugar. Make the whole into a light dough with as much milk as may be necessary, adding either currants or mixed spice, according to taste. Set the dough to rise in a warm place for an hour or two; then form it into round balls the size you wish the buns to be, and set them on a tin covered with a piece of flannel, to rise again for about twenty minutes. When well risen mark a cross on each with the back of a knife, brush them over with milk, and bake in the oven.

EARTHQUAKE.—The island of Chio, Scio, or Skio, for the name is thus variously spelt, is situated in the Egean Sea, separated from the coast of Anatolia by a channel not more than seven miles wide where narrowest, and about fifty-three miles west of Smyrna. The island is the ancient Chios, and contends with many other places for the honour of having given birth to Homer, an excavation in the rock being pointed out as the place where "the blind old bard of Scio's rocky isle" is said to have sought. Chios is of somewhat quadrangular form, thirty-two miles long from north to south, with a mean breadth of about twelve miles, and an area of 236 geographical square miles. The population of the island is over 60,000; the capital, Chio, containing about a quarter of the whole number of the inhabitants. Chio, which appears to have been the principal sufferer by the recent earthquake, is situated near the middle of the east coast, and consists almost entirely of houses built for the most part of hewn stone or brick, and generally with terraced roofs. It is defended by a castle, and the manufacture of velvet and some lighter fabrics is carried on in the town, while at its harbour, famed of two moles and provided with two lighthouses, which are rendered necessary by the difficulty of access, a considerable trade is done.

Next Week, in No. 941, will appear a PORTRAIT AND BIOGRAPHY OF THE LATE EARL OF BEACONSFIELD.

CHATTERING MARK and LAUGHING WILLIAM, two engineers, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Chattering Mark is twenty-three, medium height, light hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children. Laughing William is twenty-three, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of music and singing.

THE ANSWER.

HAVE I love for the beautiful darling, who nestles so close in my arms,
Whose eyes meet my own in the gloaming, whose love is the chief of her charms:
Who murmurs affectionate phrases, her head pillowed here on my breast—
As some pretty birdling might nestle secure in its own downy nest?
Whose heart-faith is proof against falsehoods or fears?
Our lives to be linked through the gathering years?

Have mothers true love for their dear ones, have turtle doves love for their mates?
Is there love and its fruits mid the angels, or cherubs that watch at heaven's gates?
Is there love in our holy religion, affection or faith in the soul,
To utter its songs through the ages when heavens are rolled up as a scroll?
All faiths of the earth or of regions above,
Commingle and meet in the form that I love.

Is there aught in our earthly experience more true in its instincts than this,
More pure in its wish for perfection, more full in its blessings and bliss?
More faithful or grand in its meanings, more sweet in its murmuring song,
When love is the anthem of angels, that heaven's golden echoes prolong?
All this have I given to the heart at my side,
For she is my chosen companion and bride.

I list to her voice in the breezes, I see her sweet face in my dreams,
She lives in all fancies at evening, and yet when the morning sun beams
No song but hath her in its echo, no flower but hath her in its grace,
No wind-harp but utters her praises, no stream but reflecteth her face;
In all things of earth her glad presence I see,
For she is the world in completeness to me.

And far in the mists of the distance—where clouds of eternity roll—
I look for our dual existence where love sings its songs of the soul;
Ours not the brief faith of a moment, that smiles like a flower at its birth,
To gladden a day with its beauty, then sink with the evening to earth,
But ours the affection that lives evermore,
Though it lead through the storms to the infinite shore.

Yes, I love the demure little damsel who nestles so close in my arms,
And pray that the merciful Master may shield her from harm;
I ask and receive the affection which looks from her beautiful eyes,
And trust that its rays are reflections from altars whose flame never dies;
True love is immortal, is sacred, divine;
And this is her dowry; her treasure and mine.
I. E. J.

WHISPERING BILL, twenty-one, medium height, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

JOHN D., twenty-six, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty-four with a view to matrimony.

SQUIRE and NIN, two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. Squire is eighteen, medium height, fair, blue eyes, fond of singing and dancing. Nin is eighteen, medium height, dark, good-looking, fond of music and singing. Respondents must be from twenty to twenty-eight.

WILD VIOLET, twenty, tall, fair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about twenty-four, tall, dark, fond of home.

POLLIE and JENNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. Pollie is twenty-two, medium height, dark, good-looking, fond of music and dancing. Jennie is twenty-one, medium height, fair, blue eyes, good-looking, fond of home and children. Respondents must be twenty-three and twenty-four.

LITTLE FRANCES, twenty-four, brown hair, grey eyes, would like to correspond with a fair young gentleman about twenty-six or thirty.

LORELY, fifty, good-looking, would like to correspond with a man about sixty.

CHERRY, GRAPE and ORANGE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen from eighteen to twenty-two. Cherry is seventeen, dark, good-looking. Grape is twenty, tall, dark, fond of home and music. Orange is twenty-one, tall, fair.

HAPPY MAT, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young gentleman.

LOVELY GEORGE, eighteen, medium height, dark, good-looking, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

MODEST LILY, twenty-six, brown hair, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young gentleman.

LIZZIE and ANNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Lizzie is twenty, medium height, dark. Annie is nineteen, medium height, fair hair, dark eyes.

GUARDSMAN, twenty-four, tall, fair, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady from nineteen to twenty-four with a view to matrimony.

DEEP TWELVE and MARK SEVEN, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies.

UNION JACK BILL and WHITE ENSIGN FRANK, two signalmen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Union Jack Bill is tall, fair, blue eyes, fond of home and children. White Ensign Frank is medium height, dark, of a loving disposition.

LIVELY EM, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about eighteen.

LOUISE and EDNA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Louise is twenty-two, tall, dark hair and eyes. Edna is twenty-five, tall, fair, blue eyes.

ALBERT and TOM, two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies between eighteen and twenty-four. Albert is twenty, dark, good-looking. Tom is twenty-four, fair, good-looking.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

DEVIL DICK is responded to by—Frances, twenty, medium height, fair.

LILY by—Chris, eighteen, brown hair and eyes, fond of dancing.

ROSEBUD by—Walter, seventeen, of a loving disposition, fond of dancing.

SNOWDROP by—Fred, seventeen, dark hair and eyes, of a loving disposition.

HAPPY JIM by—Rose, twenty, brown hair, grey eyes, fond of music.

LAUGHING JACK by—Lily, eighteen, medium height, fond of music and dancing.

SAUCY CHARLIE by—Maud.

DEVIL DICK by—Gertrude.

STRIKING VELOCITY by—Britta, twenty-three, medium height.

HOPE by—Charity, twenty-six, medium height.

FIREBIRDS by—Violet.

EDWIN by—Lizzie W., sixteen, medium height.

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